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Slytherin's Potter

Chapter One: A Potter? In Slytherin? No Way!

Lily took in deep breath as she watched her family disappear from her compartment window. She'd been dreaming about going to Hogwarts since Teddy started, and now she was going. But she couldn't quell the nerves that were fluttering through her stomach. She wasn't used to being away from home for very long.

"So are you guys excited to join Gryffindor?" James asked happily. He and Fred had been the ones to find an empty compartment for the family. Lily sat by the window, and Hugo sat between her and Rose, and across from her were James, Fred, and Albus. The rest of the family had gone off with friends. Honestly, Lily wished that Louis had stayed around. Being the calmest one of the family, she always felt at ease with him.

Hugo looked a little green as well. "Yeah, I guess," he mumbled. He took in a gulp. "What happens if I don't make it into Gryffindor?" he asked hesitantly.

"Then we disown you," James answered seriously. But then him and Fred looked at each other and laughed. Lily rolled her eyes.

"Quit teasing them!" Rose scolded. She turned toward her brother. "If you don't make it, then you don't make it. It doesn't matter. You're still are family."

"Yeah, we'll still love you," James assured with a smile.

"Besides," Albus told them, "I was afraid of the same thing. And I'm a Gryffindor."

"And you two are the most Gryffindor-like of us all," Rose told her brother.

"Yeah, every Potter has been a Gryffindor, and only a few Weasleys have ever been in any house other than Gryffindor. Even Teddy was a Gryffindor!" James bragged.

"And while we're on the subject of newcomers," Fred spoke, "Rose and Albus, how excited are you about finally being able to go to Hogsmeade?"

Albus grinned. "It's going to be awesome!"

"You're only so excited because you two never snuck out there with us," James teased.

Rose gave him a stern look. "You two could have been caught."

Lily sighed and looked out the window next to her. The argument droned on, but she ignored it. Before she ever got her letter, Lily always gushed and imaged how she was going to be a Gryffindor, just like her parents. She had dreamed about planning pranks with her brother in the Gryffindor common room. But she started to worry once she received her letter. Lily started to think about her own traits and personality, and now she was no longer sure if she would be a Gryffindor. She liked to think she was smart, that she was fair, and that she was resourceful. Those were all traits of different houses. But when she had told Hugo her fear, he pointed out that she was more brave and loyal than anything else. Sadly, this didn't completely quiet her fears.

The trolley came to their compartment around noon. Lily bought a few Chocolate Frogs. She ate the frogs, and threw the cards to Hugo. He was a faithful collector, so any card Lily got, she gave it to him. But soon Lily grew restless, and had to leave the compartment to stretch her legs. She rejected the offers of others to go with her. She wanted to just walk, and to maybe find Louis.

Louis was one of the rare Weasleys to not make it into Gryffindor. Last year he was sorted into Ravenclaw, but he seemed very proud of it. He didn't care at all that he wasn't in Gryffindor like the rest of the others. From what Lily was told, he was very popular in his house, so she wasn't surprised to find him in a compartment that was full of other Ravenclaws. Some were even older than he was, but he seemed to be the center of the group. She started to turn, but the door opened behind her, and Louis stood there.

"Hey, Lil!" he greeted. She could see the others all peering out to see her. She could also hear whispers about the 'youngest Potter'.

"What's up?" Louis asked. He ignored the whispers, and everyone else behind him.

Lily shrugged. "Nothing, I thought I'd see what you were doing, but you're talking with your friends, so . . ."

"It's ok," he interrupted. "Just wait one moment, and I'll walk with you." He turned around, and said something she couldn't hear to his friends. Then with a smile he turned around, and closed the compartment door behind him. "Let's walk."

They walked up the train, making their way around other kids that were out of their compartments as well. They didn't speak, but then Louis pulled them into an empty compartment. When he closed the door, he sat down next to her, and was silent.

Lily looked at him. "Louis, were you scared when you were put in Ravenclaw instead of Gryffindor?"

Louis shook his head. "No. I knew that it wouldn't make a difference to the others. I mean, Victoire was a Hufflepuff, and we all love her."

"But, everyone else around your age was put into Gryffindor," Lily commented. "You weren't afraid that you wouldn't be able to see them as much? Or that you would lose touch with them?"

Once again, he shook his head. "Victoire told me that she hung out with a lot of kids from other houses. And as we both know, she moved in with a Gryffindor last year. I just figured that if she could do it, then so could I."

"So you just sucked it up and went for it?" Lily clarified.

Louis gave a smile. "That's one way to put it. Having doubts?"

Lily sighed. "Kind of. It's just that I'm not sure if I'm Gryffindor material anymore. What if I end up in another House?"

"Well, then we'll have to work around our schedules to have talks like this one," Louis replied. He put a hand on her shoulder and smiled brightly. "Look, Lil, if you end up in a different House than me, or than the others, then it won't matter. I know that I'll still make time to hang out with you."

"Really?" Lily asked hesitantly.

He gave a chuckle. "Of course I will. You're the only one I know that prefers Crystallized Pineapple to any type of chocolate," he teased.

Lily finally laughed.

The train ride to Hogwarts was a long one. Lily talked with Louis for quite a while, but she eventually wandered back to the other compartment. She and Rose kicked the boys out so that they could change into their robes, and when they got off the train. Lily finally saw someone that made her forget all about being sorted.

"Firs'-years! Firs'-years this way! Over here!" Hagrid called. He held a lantern in one hand, and his other giant hand was waving the newcomers over to him and the boats. Lily and Hugo ran over toward him.

"Hiya, Hagrid!" they both greeted excitedly. Standing next to him, they just brushed the height of his waist.

Hagrid looked down and smiled at them. "Well, hey there! Great to finally see you two here. You'll have ter come down ter me hut sometimes."

"Totally!" Hugo agreed with a smile.

"Well, hop in. We got ter get goin'. A lot ter do tonight," Hagrid told them with a smile.

They both smiled widely as they joined two other kids in a boat. All the first years were silent during the ride, until they could see the castle. Then whispers and gasps and murmurs erupted from them.

"Woah," Hugo murmured.

"It's beautiful," the other girl in their boat whispered.

"And big," Lily mumbled.

When they finally reached the dock, Hagrid led them up to the marvelous castle. But then he led them to someone that Lily recognized easily. Her 'uncle', Neville Longbottom.

"Here they are, Professor Longbottom," Hagrid told him. "Ready ter follow yeh."

Lily grinned. It would be hard getting used to calling him Professor Longbottom instead of Uncle.

Neville grinned. "Good then. Please, follow me, first years."

He led them away from Hagrid and into the grande entrance hall. Lily marveled at the size of it. He led them past a large, closed door, where Lily could hear a loud murmur of voices. She imagined that it was the Great Hall the others had talked about. Neville led them into a small room off the hall, where they all crowded in.

Neville stood in front of them. "Welcome, first years, to Hogwarts. My name is Professor Longbottom. Now, I will soon take you into the Great Hall, but before you sit down, you have to be sorted into your houses. Now, the sorting is important. Houses are like family. You sleep in the same dorms, eat at the same table, and have classes with them.

"The houses are named Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, Slytherin, and Hufflepuff. While here, all houses will be competing for what is known as the House Cup. To win, each house collects House points, and the one with the most points is the winner. Good deeds will earn you points, and trouble making will lose you points." He paused to look at them all.

"Now, I'm going to leave for a moment, and I will come back once we're ready. Now, take this time to maybe clean up or socialize. It's your time," he ended. Then he moved toward the doors, the kids parting for him to move easily through them. Once the door closed after him, a tension covered them.

"I don't think I'll ever get used to calling him Professor Longbottom," Hugo muttered into Lily's ear.

Lily smiled and nodded. "I like Uncle Neville much better."

"Maybe he'll let us get away with it," Hugo said quietly.

The two were quiet after that, and no one else spoke either. It was a relief when Neville came back to get them.

"We're ready now," he said with a smile, and he led them back out into the entrance hall. Then he pushed open those grand doors, and led them through the Great Hall. The older students were all murmuring and watching them. Lily ignored them, and looked around. This room was just as grande, and its ceiling was amazing. It looked like the actual night sky. She was sure it was magic, but she knew it had to be powerful. They were stopped just before a long table where the staff was sitting. In front of the table was a stool with an ugly looking hat on it.

Lily, and the other first years, jumped when it started to sing. Lily listened carefully, but all the hat seemed to sing about was the difference of the houses. She had heard enough about that from her brothers and cousins. But when it finished, all the older kids and staff clapped. Then Neville stepped forward with a long scroll.

"When I call your name, you put on the hat and sit on the stool," he explained. "Angel, Clay."

A boy with dirty blonde hair stepped forward, and sat up on the stool. His cheeks were a deep red color, and his hands were fidgeting with his collar. Neville placed the hat on his head. There was a moment of silence, followed by the hat's shout of,

"GRYFFINDOR!"

Claps followed, and a lot cheers from what had to be the Gryffindor table. Lily could see most of her family sitting there. Neville took the hat off the boy's head, and the boy stumbled his way over to the table to sit down.

"Avery, Xavier!" Neville called next.

This boy had a sharp face with inky black hair. The only nervousness Lily could see in him was his eyes. His eyes flitted around the room, not stopping on anything in particular. When the hat was placed on his head, his eyes disappeared behind the fabric.

"SLYTHERIN!" the hat yelled.

Now the loud cheers came from the other end of the room. There claps from the other tables seemed much quieter for this kid. After this kid sat down, the routine went the same.

"Baddock, Hunter."

"SLYTHERIN!"

"Belle, Hannah."

"GRYFFINDOR!"

"Bones, Izzy."

"SLYTHERIN!"

Lily started getting bored, and they were only on the B's. But when "Carmichael, Ginger" became the first new Ravenclaw, Lily looked for the loudest table cheering. There she found Louis, clapping for their new housemate. He caught his cousin's eyes staring at him, and he smiled. A little of her fear disappeared.

More names were called, and soon Hugo was as bored as she was. The only person they recognized was Stacy Finnigan, who went to Gryffindor. They had no interest in anyone else. But soon the P's came, and Lily and Hugo were a bit more alert.

"Page, Jon." This was a tiny boy, who seemed very uncoordinated as he walked up to the stool.

"RAVENCLAW!"

Lily didn't move her eyes from the hat as she waited for her name. She didn't have to wait long.

"Potter, Lily," Neville called.

Whispers broke out among the other students. As Lily walked by some of the older ones, she caught a few.

"Another Potter."

"Another Gryffindor, you mean."

"Gryffindor gets another star."

Lily ignored the whispers then. She was determined to not be compared to her family. When she hopped onto the stool, Neville gave her a small smile before placing the hat on her own head. Then her vision was blocked by the musty fabric.

"Ah, another Potter, eh?" the hat mumbled. Lily did her best not to jump at the sound. "Well, I must say you are different from your brothers. Your mind isn't plagued with the word 'Gryffindor'. You seem very . . . hesitant about what house you want to be in. So where to put you?"

Closed her eyes, trying to keep her mind blank. She didn't want to give the hat any ideas. She wanted to be placed based on who she really was.

"Very bright, no doubt. Very witty. But also very courageous and loyal. Famous Gryffindor qualities. Very ambitious, resourceful, and a bit cunning. You know how to get things you want. But you work hard, you play fair. Where to put you?" it repeated.

Lily was starting to lose patience as this thing decided. The nerves in her stomach felt like they were going to explode out.

"Hmm . . . well you don't want to be compared to your brothers and cousins. You want to be different. Unexpected. I know just where to put you for you to achieve that. SLYTHERIN!"

A stunned silence fell from the room. And as the hat was pulled from her head, Lily kept her face expressionless. She was thankful to receive her mother's acting skills. Once she dropped from the stool, claps and cheers came from only one table. The Slytherin table. Not to mention jeers.

"Take that, Gryffindor!" one boy shouted.

"We got a Potter!" one girl trilled.

Lily ignored it, and didn't look at Neville, or any other table but her own. She sat down next to a calm girl who took no notice of her. And she was silent. But a tall boy with smooth brown hair leaned over another new first year, and held out his hand to her.

"Welcome to Slytherin, Potter. I'm Tyson Derrick, the seventh year prefect," he introduced.

Keeping her face neutral, Lily shook his hand. "Hello, Tyson. Thank you for the welcome," she told him. She wasn't sure if she was happy to meet him, so she kept out of her reply. But Tyson didn't seem to mind. Instead he leaned back into his chair with a smug smile. Lily turned back to the sorting. Another P was sorted into Slytherin, Lola Pritchard. She sat across from Lily, and didn't say a word.

"Pucey, Jace."

A short and skinny boy stood forward. Lily bit her lip. He had to be the shortest boy there, but that wasn't what stood out about him. It was his ears. His bright blonde hair was shaggy, and both of his ears poked out. And when the hat was placed on his head, his ears kept it from falling over his eyes.

"SLYTHERIN!" the hat called.

Among the claps, Lily noticed the girl sitting next to her leaning across the table, and whispering to Lola Pritchard. "Great, we get him of all people."

"It looks like he could fly away with those ears," Pritchard giggled. The other girls giggled as well, but it all stopped when Jace Pucey sat down on the chair to Lily's right. Lily wanted to glare at the other girls. The boy hadn't even sat down and he was already being mocked.

Lily watched the rest of the sorting with an impassive face. When Hugo was called and sorted into Gryffindor, she caught his eyes. He gave her an apologetic look as he went and sat down at the Gryffindor table, where he belonged. It was then that Lily noticed that the cheers from her own family members had quieted down after her sorting.

The sorting ended with "Wood, Connie," joining Gryffindor. Lily knew her a little, and wasn't surprised at where she was put. Neville then took the stool and hat away, and the man in the middle of the staff table, most likely the headmaster, stood up.

"Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! I am of course the headmaster, Professor Brown," he said, his voice booming across the hall. "Now, let me just say one thing before we eat. Enjoy!"

Lily finally cracked a smile at the man, and then the food appeared, and talking began. Lily started to fill her plate. Now that her nerves had calmed a bit, she had a lot of room to be hungry. As she ate, she listened to the conversations around her.

"I knew I would be a Slytherin," the girl next to her said. Her expression was very superior, and her head seemed to automatically be raised high. "Every one of my family has been a Slytherin. It was only expected."

Lily wanted to scoff at her reasoning. She herself was proof that family didn't matter when it came to choosing houses.

"Well, my family's been a bit scattered," one girl mentioned. Lily had seen her before, but just couldn't place her. "My mother was a Hufflepuff. And I don't know him personally, but I was told that my father was a Ravenclaw."

"I don't think family matters," Lola Pritchard told them. She looked at Lily. "I think Lily here is proof."

The girls seemed to expect her to talk, so Lily swallowed the food she was eating. "Actually, my cousin Victoire was proof first. She was a Hufflepuff."

"Well you're the first when it comes to the Potter family," the huffy girl next to her pointed out.

Lily gave a nod. "True. But what does it matter?"

She kept her head high. "Nothing, just pointing out facts."

Lily raised a brow. She had the feeling that this girl was trying to get a rise out of her, so she ignored her, and turned back to her food. But Lola Pritchard continued to talk.

"It doesn't matter," Lola told her. "We're just doing our best to get to know each other." She looked at the girl next to Lily, and then back at her. "We might be failing on getting along though."

Lily grinned. "Just a little."

She and Lola didn't talk after that, but were silent for the rest of the feast. When everyone had finished eating, the booming man stood up again.

"Now that we are all fed, I would like to make a few announcements. First, I want to welcome the new students to Hogwarts, and to welcome the older students to a new year. Also, first years should note that the forest is strictly forbidden. Also, Mr. Goyle, our caretaker, wants me to remind everyone that magic is not allowed in between classes. And that he has a list of forbidden items, and he would like you to check for any new items.

"Also, Quidditch tryouts will be soon, and you should contact your House captain if you want to try out. Now, finally off to bed. First years, follow your prefects. They will show you the way," Professor Brown finished.

Everyone stood up, and the older students all rushed out of the Great Hall. The first years stayed behind to follow their prefects. Lily noticed that Tyson was not the one that was showing them around. Instead it was a bulky boy with short, greasy black hair.

"I'm your fifth year prefect," he told them in a bored voice. "My name's Adrian Flint. So if you ever have questions, then I guess you can ask me, or one of the other prefects. Now come along."

He waved them forward, and out of the Great Hall. Lily caught the Gryffindor first years being led up the stairs. Unlike them, Adrian Flint led them downwards. It was silent as they walked through the dim dungeons.

"Now, as a note, portraits talk, so don't let them mislead you if you get lost. Our Head of House is Professor Slughorn. He teaches

Potions," Adrian listed off. "Don't worry about Goyle's list. He never cares if a Slytherin is caught with something they shouldn't have."

Lily raised a brow. She had only heard a story or two about Goyle from her parents. But from her brothers, they told her that he was a git who favored Slytherin House.

Finally, Adrian stopped at a flat, stone wall. "This wall leads to our common room. Our password is 'Salazar'."

At the word, the stone wall slid out of the way, and Adrian Flint led them inside of the Slytherin common room. It was a low underground room. It was lit up by hanging green lamps, and a fireplace. The walls were the only rough thing about it. The furniture was plush, and in a weird way the room was elegant. Once they were all in, the wall slid shut.

"Now, the dormitories are just up there. The boys on the right, and the girls on your left. Now, your things are in your rooms, and just remember this. As Slytherins, we are better than the others, and we take pride in that. So winning the House and Quidditch Cups are important, and we all will work hard to win them. Now go to bed," Adrian told them.

Lily rolled her eyes at the words of Slytherin superiority, but she followed the other girls up to the girls' dorms, and found the door that read "First Year Girls". They all went inside and found that their things were by their new beds. They were all feeling a little tired, so they started to change for bed.

"So, Potter," one of the girls addressed, "how are you taking to being in Slytherin?"

Lily let out a breath through her nose as she climbed up onto her bed. Her sleep clothes differed from the other girls'. Unlike prim and proper clothing with dark colors, Lily was wearing a pair of shorts and one of James's bright red shirts.

"Call me Lily," she told the girl. "And as to your question, ask me in the morning." With that, Lily closed the hanging of her bed, and settled down to sleep. She sighed as she closed her eyes. She herself wasn't sure how she felt about being a Slytherin yet. Mainly,

she was wondering what her family thought of her now. Hugo at least seemed the same, if only a bit sorry for her.

She was praying that Louis meant what he said.

Chapter Two: Everything's Changing

When Lily awoke, she felt fear creep up on her. She knew she was going to have to see her family today, and she still wasn't sure how they were taking her being in Slytherin. But she forced herself to get up, and throw open her bed hangings. The other girls were all starting to awake as well, and Lola Pritchard was already getting dressed. Lily followed her example, and dressed into her robes. Each one had her house symbol, and was lined with green. It was almost taunting her as she put it on. She tied up her hair, and then she was ready. It seemed as if Lola Pritchard had been waiting for her, because once Lily left the dorm, she had followed.

"Mind if I walk with you?" she asked.

Lily shrugged. "Not at all. May I ask why?"

Lola smiled. "Well, you seem very interesting to me. You didn't seem very surprised or anything when you were put in Slytherin."

Lily sighed. "Well, I'm glad my shock didn't show. It's not that I expected to be in Gryffindor. I didn't know where I would be put, so it was going to be a shock no matter what."

Lola nodded. "Well, I was expecting to be in Slytherin. Everyone in my family has."

"I thought you said family didn't matter," Lily quipped.

She shrugged. "Oh, I know. But I wanted to be here. I wanted to be the same place as my family. Didn't you?"

Lily looked at her before they entered the Great Hall. "I wanted to be put in the House I fit best in."

With those words, the two girls entered the Great Hall, and moved to sit close to the middle of the Slytherin table. Soon, Jace Pucey sat next to him. Again, his ears were poking through his hair, and Lily tried not to notice.

"Hey! I'm Jace," he greeted happily. Now that the sorting was over, he seemed very cheerful and happy.

Lily gave him a smile. "I'm Lily."

"I know," Jace told her. "After your sorting, we all know." Then he laughed.

Lily laughed too. "Yeah, I make shocking impressions."

Jace waved it off. "I thought it was cool. I wished I could have started an upset like that. Maybe I should have told the hat to put me in Hufflepuff."

Again, Lily laughed. This Jace kid was funny.

Lola grinned. "Your humor's as big as your ears."

Lily was surprised at Lola's words. She had seemed like such a nice girl.

But Jace didn't seem offended. He just grinned back at her. "Ah, Lola, my dear old friend. By sitting here I guess that means I have to deal with your charming remarks and hideously dirty hair," he shot back.

Lily looked at Lola's hair. It was a weird shade, hard to tell if was meant to be brown or blonde, but she wouldn't have called it dirty. But by the way the two spoke, Lily had a feeling that they already knew each other.

"And I have to deal with the fact that I can never whisper something without you hearing it," Lola replied.

Their debate was broken by Neville coming by and handing them all schedules. Lily scanned hers. She had Potions with Gryffindors to start. And after that she had Herbology with the Hufflepuffs. She placed her schedule on the table. Her classes didn't seem too bad.

"Wow, so we really do have a Potter in the Slytherin house?"

They all looked to where an older girl was standing beside them. Her hair was long, and a pretty reddish-brown color. Her eyes were piercing and green. But she was smiling, and nothing about her posture seemed hostile.

"And?" Lily asked.

The girl smiled and sat down next to her. "Just surprised. You must admit that it's a shock."

Lily sighed. "Yes, but how many times will it be brought up is what I'm wondering."

The girl grinned this time. "Face it. This is a major upset. A lot of people will be talking about it. I can't imagine how your brothers are taking it."

"That makes two of us," Lily told her.

The girl eyed her a moment before holding out her hand. "I'm Amanda Baddock. I'm a fourth year."

Lily shook her hand. "Nice to know," she told her.

She shook Lola's hand too. "I'm Lola Pritchard."

"I figured," Amanda commented. "You look an awful lot like your sister."

"Except her hair looks normal," Jace joked. Then he smiled at Amanda. "I'm Jace Pucey."

"The one with the big ears," Lola pointed out.

Amanda laughed. "Well, I see an amazing friendship growing between the two of you."

"It will be swimming!" Jace said with a high voice that made the rest of them laugh.

"Associating with a Potter, Amanda?"

The voice was impassive yet amused. Lily turned to see that a boy was coming toward them. He had platinum-blonde hair that was smooth, reaching the middle of his forehead. His eyes were a dark grey color. He stood tall, and his fame was strong. This was another person that Lily had seen before, but again, she couldn't remember where.

Lola and Jace quieted as he came closer, and stopped just across the table from Lily, next to Lola. But Amanda didn't seem at all shaken.

"No, I'm associating with Lily, a new Slytherin, Scorpius," Amanda retorted.

Lily didn't know where she had seen him, but she knew where she had heard that name before. Scorpius Malfoy, the person that James and Albus hated the most. Actually, not many of her cousins liked him either. Lily had heard stories about many fights him and her brothers had gotten into.

Scorpius sat down next to Lola. "Well, then I guess I should be a bit nicer. To our new housemate, that is."

Amanda rolled her eyes. She looked at Lily. "Don't mind him. He's always a git."

Scorpius grinned as he looked at Lily. "I'm Scorpius Malfoy." Unlike the other older kids that had introduced themselves, Scorpius didn't hold out his hand in greeting.

Lily gave him a nod. "I'm Lily Potter."

Scorpius's grin grew. "So, how are your brothers taking this news?"

Lily shrugged. "No idea."

"We should find out," Scorpius told her, and he turned around to look at the Gryffindor table. Lily wanted to smack him, but she couldn't help but scan the table for her family as well. She found them all sitting together. Their heads were close together as they talked to each other. Lily had a dreadful feeling that she knew what they were talking about.

Scorpius turned back to her. "Well, Lily, would you like to accompany me over to your family's meeting?"

Lily raised a brow. "What are you talking about?"

He kept grinning. "Well, I'm going over there, and I was wondering if you would like to join me?"

"Why are you going to the Gryffindor table?" Lily asked.

His grin grew smug. "Well, I want to brag that Slytherin has something they don't. As payback for when they bragged that Albus Potter supposedly has a brain."

Lily bit her lip. She didn't want to laugh at his joke about her brother. At least not in front of him. "No, I think I'll stay here."

Scorpius shrugged. "Suit yourself. I'm sure I'll see you later."

With that, he left Lola's side and walked off.

Amanda sighed. "I don't understand the hatred him and your brothers share. Well, I guess I do. Your brothers seem to hate Slytherins."

Lily's brow furrowed. She hadn't heard either of her brothers make any remarks about the house, just about a few people, but they hadn't even specified what houses those kids were in.

But she didn't want to comment on it. "Well then I'm curious on how they'll take to me," she joked.

Amanda gave a small smile. "Every Slytherin is wondering the same thing."

The topic dropped after that, and soon there was just talk about classes. Soon Lily, Jace, and Lola left to get their things for Potions. As they walked to the classroom, Hugo had caught up with them.

"Lily! Hey," he greeted. "How you holding up?"

Lily smiled at him. "I'm fine, Hugo. You?"

Hugo shrugged. "I'm doing fine. Can't say the same for the others."

Lily raised a brow. "Yeah, how are they taking my being sorted into Slytherin?" she asked.

Hugo gave a sigh. "Well, they aren't really happy, but . . . I wouldn't say that they hate you or anything. It's hard to describe."

Lily laughed, but then noticed Jace and Lola's expecting faces. "Hugo, this is Jace Pucey and Lola Pritchard. Guys, this is Hugo, my cousin."

Hugo gave a smile and a nod. "Hey."

"Hi," Lola greeted with a smile.

"Great to meet ya!" Jace greeted with a big smile. Then he laughed. Surprisingly, Hugo laughed with him.

"So, Lil," Hugo spoke, "did you really talk with Scorpius Malfoy at breakfast?"

Lily eyed her cousin carefully. "Yeah, why?"

He shrugged. "Just wondering. He mentioned it when he came by this morning. He tried starting trouble with Al and James. Let's just say that he succeeded."

Lily gave a scoff and shook her head. "With their tempers, I'm not surprised. The Potter temper isn't a patient one."

They all laughed as they walked into the Potion classroom. Hugo separated to sit by a few boys from Gryffindor, so Lily sat with Jace and Lola. When the class started, Professor Slughorn came in with a big smile on his face.

"Hello, first years! I'm glad to see you all today! Potions is an excellent subject, one for brilliant minds," he told them all.

"So get out, Jace," Lola muttered.

Lily bit back a giggle.

"Now, let's start with a roll call," Slughorn continued. He went on to call everyone's name. When he said Lily's, she raised her hand.

"Here," she announced.

But Slughorn didn't go on to the next name. Instead he smiled. "Harry Potter's daughter?"

Lily sighed. "Yeah, that's me."

"Well, I'm glad to have you here, and in Slytherin. Though it was quite a surprise. I thought both your parents, and your grandparents," he told her. "You look a lot like your mother, and your father's mother, for whom you were obviously named," he rambled.

Lily smiled politely. "Thank you, sir."

"Have you ever been interested in the subject of Potions, Miss Potter?" he asked.

Lily tried not to roll her eyes. "Kind of. It's always sounded interesting, at least." Really, she didn't care.

But Slughorn's smile got even bigger. "Well, I'm glad to hear it. Now, Lola Pritchard," he said, continuing the roll call.

When the class started, Lily found that she really did like Potions. It was very simple, so when Slughorn insisted on talking to her while she worked, she had no problem keeping on task while she talked. And Slughorn loved her. She already seemed to be his favorite student. When he started to go around and check everyone else's potions, he awarded her ten points three times, just for doing the simplest things right. At the end of the class, Lily had been one of the few kids to get the potion right.

"I don't see how you made the potion right," Hugo said as he walked out with her. "The class was terrible!"

Lily chuckled. "I thought it was really easy."

"Lucky you," Hugo muttered. But then he sigh. "Well, I've got to head off to Charms now. I'll see you later, Lil."

"Bye, Hugo," Lily said as he walked away. She walked with the others out to the greenhouses.

Herbology proved to be easy as well. She only slipped and called Professor Longbottom Uncle Neville once, and luckily for her, it was

when she was talking to him privately. She received five points for answering a question right, and the whole class was easy. Professor Longbottom was a very unbiased teacher, and he didn't seem to have a favorite student like Slughorn.

After Herbology they had a break. Lily stayed in the common room with Jace and Lola. They were joined by Amanda Baddock once again, and they sat there and conversed. Then they had Transfiguration with the Ravenclaws. This class was taught by Professor Bell, an old Quidditch teammate of her fathers. Transfiguration was definitely the hardest subject so far, but still Lily didn't have too big of problems. At least not like the boy who turned his hand into a paw.

When Lily and the others finally sat down to lunch, Scorpius Malfoy graced them with his presence once again.

"Why hello, fellow Slytherins," he said in that amused voice.

"Scorpius," Lily said shortly.

"Hello, Scorpius," the other two said more warmly.

"Well, Lily, I must say that your brothers weren't very happy when I brought up your house this morning," Scorpius mentioned.

Lily finally looked up at him. "Really?" she asked dryly. "My cousin already told me."

Scorpius kept grinning. "Dear Albus has been shooting me dirty looks all day. I've even gotten a few from Miss Rose."

"What did they say when you brought it up?" Lily asked delicately.

Now his grin turned smug. "They got very upset. Why, James even threatened to hex me."

Lily finally couldn't bite back a grin. "I can't imagine him doing that."

"Why he did. He said he'd hex my hair off," Scorpius said with a mocking serious face.

"And what did you say?" Lily asked. Her own tone was amused now.

Now Scorpius's eyes grew mischievous. "I told him I'd hex his off so that we could look alike. But then I thought about and said that it wouldn't work. I'm much too handsome to look anything like him."

Lily finally gave a laugh. And Scorpius seemed satisfied. "Finally. It's hard to make you laugh."

Lily rolled her eyes. "Perhaps I just don't like you insulting my family."

"Perhaps, but I know that siblings make fun of each other, so I was sure you would enjoy my comments," he replied. He started to fill his own plate.

"Perhaps I just like it when I do it," Lily suggested.

He stopped and grinned directly at her. "Well, point for you. I hadn't known if that was the truth or not. But, I've proved that it's not true, so case closed."

Lily gave a teasing sigh. "I guess you have. My cover is blown."

"Hey, Lil," everyone turned to see Hugo walking toward him. Lily noticed that almost all of the Slytherins were watching with hostile eyes, and a few others from different houses were watching as well.

"Hello, Hugo. What are you doing on this side of the Great Hall?" Lily asked.

Hugo didn't sit down, but instead just stood to the side of Lily with his hands in his pockets. He looked rather uncomfortable at where he was. "Well, James and Al sent me over here. They wanna talk to you."

Lily's stomach clenched, and she had the distinct idea that she might be sick. But she swallowed thickly and raised an impassive brow. "Really? Why didn't they come get me themselves?"

Hugo gave a small and quiet scoff that Lily barely heard. But Hugo ignored her retort. "They're waiting for you outside the Great Hall." Then he waited. Lily had the idea that he wasn't supposed to leave until she went to talk to them.

Lily sighed heavily as she stood up. She looked at the other three. "I should be back soon. I doubt this will take long. Those two aren't ones for having well-thought out talks."

She heard Scorpius laughing when she turned and started walking with Hugo. But Hugo didn't follow her out. Lily went out alone, and found her brothers standing alone in the entrance hall. They didn't say anything either, but waved her over to the tapestry they were standing by. When she came over, James pulled it back to reveal a long hallway. Lily stepped in, and they both followed. James let the tapestry fall, and the remains of the filtering light were tinted red.

Before Lily could demand to know what they wanted, James had wrapped her into a tight hug. "I am so sorry, Lily."

Lily squirmed out of his grip. She brushed off her robe. "Sorry for what?" she asked.

"About you being put in Slytherin. We really didn't expect it would happen," James apologized.

Albus nodded, his face just as guilty. "We wouldn't have joked about you being in another House that much. You're the most Gryffindor-like out of all of us," he explained.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Well, apparently you were all wrong. I'm more Slytherin than anything," she quipped. "Besides, guys, it's just a House. It doesn't matter."

James's brow furrowed. "It matters, Lil. I don't want my sister growing up around a bunch of filthy snakes! But don't worry, because you've got Hugo, and Stacy Finnigan and Connie Wood this year too, and you have the rest of the family as well."

"And Louis, and you can always talk to us," Albus put in.

Lily's eyes became glaring. "Look, whether you like it or not, I'm one of those snakes now! And for your information, I surprisingly already have friends. Friends that if they wanted to talk to me, they wouldn't have sent out a lapdog to come and get me!" she hissed.

"You're better than those snakes!" James argued, his voice getting louder.

"No, I'm just better than you!" Lily retorted.

"Don't freak out on us," Albus warned. "We're just trying to help you."

"Well I don't have a problem, so I don't need help," Lily seethed. "Besides, I'm starting to learn that I'd rather be filthy and smart than dumb and brawny."

Her brothers were silent for a moment as they glared at her. Then through clenched teeth, James continued. "It hasn't even been a day, and you've already changed."

"Nothing about me changed," Lily replied. "You only think I have because you can't stand my House."

She brushed past both of her brothers, and pushed away the tapestry. She left both of her brothers without looking back at them. She reentered the Great Hall, and walked back to the others. Amanda Baddock was now sitting with them. Lily gave a small smile as she sat back down.

"Welcome back," Scorpius said with a grin. "It was dreadfully quiet here when you left. Until Amanda joined us that is."

"What did your brothers want?" Lola asked carefully.

Lily sighed. "They're just being prats about where I was sorted. They said they wanted to help me, and that they didn't want me growing up around a bunch of 'snakes'."

Amanda and Scorpius's eyes darkened. "What did you say?" Scorpius asked.

Lily grinned wider at him this time. "I told them that I was a snake now too, and that I'd rather be filthy and smart than dumb and brawny."

They all laughed, and Scorpius almost fell out of his chair.

"That was brilliant!" Jace told her, patting her on the back.

"And now the kings are coming back in," Scorpius mocked. Lily followed his eyes to see that James and Albus were walking back toward the rest of the family. She watched as they spoke to each other. Hugo caught her eye, and then quickly looked at his food.

Scorpius looked back at Lily, and he raised his glass. "Well, I think we should have a toast. To our newly inducted snake!"

The others laughed, but held up their glasses as well, taking a drink afterwards.

The rest of the day had passed by fast. Lily had no problems with any of the classes so far. And so far, she liked all of her teachers. But there had been a moment where time had slowed, and that was after Defense Against the Dark Arts, her last class, which happened to be when Hugo ran into her.

"Hello, Hugo," Lily had greeted.

Hugo didn't greet her back at all. He just furrowed his brow and stared at her. And when he spoke, his voice was hesitant. "I heard about your fight with James and Al."

Now Lily was just as hesitant. Lola and Jace politely excused themselves, and walked off to the common room. "And?" Lily asked.

"Did you really call me a lapdog? And say that Gryffindors are dumb and brawny?" he asked.

Lily sighed at Albus's memory for argument details. She looked at her cousin, the one who had been her best friend forever. "I'm sorry, Hugo. I was angry at them."

Hugo seemed to relax a little. "So, when do you think you three will make up and apologize?"

Lily tensed up again. "If you think they're going to apologize, then you don't know them that well. And I'm not going to apologize at all."

Hugo sighed. "This is stupid, Lil."

Lily glared at him. "What's stupid is that you think they're right."

Hugo kicked at the ground. "They just want to help."

"You don't like Slytherins either," Lily accused.

"You've heard the stories," Hugo argued. "You've heard what they did to our parents, what side they were on."

"Not every Slytherin is a death eater," Lily whispered scathingly. Then she shoved past him, and stormed off to the common room, ignoring his voice as he called her back.

Lily took in deep breaths as she slowed her walk and relaxed her shoulders. She dropped her hostile face, trying to rid herself of any anger. As she did, a bit of sadness crawled through her. She had the distinct feeling that by the end of the day, she would no longer have her best friend.

When she walked into the common room, Lily found Lola and Jace sitting at a table with two other. Lily recognized the others as Christian Vaisey and Hunter Baddock, two other first years.

"Hey, Lily," Jace greeted.

"Thank Merlin you're back!" Lola sighed happily. "I've been having to deal with talks of Quidditch and players, and everything else associated with the stupid sport!"

Lily giggled. "Well, as much as I hate to trouble you more, I happen to love the sport as well. But I'll save you and stay away from the topic."

"Thank you," she told her.

"Man, I can't wait until Friday. I'm so glad we get those afternoons off!" Jace exclaimed.

"Yeah, it's our first day, and we've already got homework for Charms and Defense Against the Dark Arts," Christian Vaisey groaned.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Our homework for Charms is to simply practice an easy spell."

"Yeah, well you're the only one that finds it easy," Christian argued.

Lily shook her head and looked at Lola. Lola rolled her eyes this time. "Boys," she muttered.

Lily nodded as she pulled out her Defense Against the Dark Arts book. The homework was to read the first two chapters. "I've been living with them all my life."

"I feel so bad for you," Lola replied.

The next two weeks went by in a blur. And Lily was right. She had lost her best friend. Hugo had turned his back on her, and ignored her in every class they had together. And soon Lily was fighting with other Gryffindors, dueling in the halls. She was glaring at her brothers, and ignoring the other members of her family. She was always walking with Lola and Jace, and she could sometimes be seen with Amanda Baddock, and Scorpius and some of his friends.

But September fourteenth brought around a good, yet bad occasion. It was the day of their first flying lesson. The bad part was that it was with Gryffindors. There were no spells or fights during the class, but Hugo confronted Lily afterwards.

"What do you want?" Lily demanded with a glare.

Hugo and his friends glared right back at her. "You should write your parents. They're worried," he muttered. And then he and the other Gryffindors stormed off. Lily just sent scathing looks at their backs, trying to ignore the guilt. She had forgotten about writing her parents the whole time she'd been at Hogwarts. She could only imagine what the others had said about her.

More days past, and Lily was getting restless. Everything was slowly becoming a routine, and she was getting bored. Fridays could be the worst. She had the whole afternoon off, and really nothing to do. She had taken to exploring the castle, but once she started re-finding secrets she knew, it became boring.

"We should do something fun!" Lily told the others. They were all sitting out on the grounds, on a Friday of course. Lily and Lola were sitting around while Jace and Christian threw around a Fanged-Frisbee.

"Well, we suggested walking around the castle and trying to find the kitchens, but you didn't want to," Christian reminded.

"I've already found the kitchens. It's not that big a deal," Lily replied.

"We could go mess with the Gryffindors," Jace offered. Lily wasn't the only one who had started to hate the Gryffindors.

Lily considered that one. "Hmm . . . maybe. But something new!" she insisted. She rolled over onto her back and then onto her side. In her vision, she could see the shape of the Whomping Willow, and she could see the Quidditch Pitch. Then she was struck with an idea. "How about we go for a fly?" she asked excitedly.

"We don't have brooms," Lola reminded.

Lily sat back up. "Yeah, but Madam Hooch probably keeps the brooms she uses for classes in her office. I bet we could break in there."

"And then get suspended," Lola argued.

"I think it's worth a try!" Jace said with a smile. He tied up the frisbee so it wouldn't chew up his bag, and then placed it back inside.

"Yeah, it'll be fun!" Christian agreed.

"Are you in, Lola?" Lily asked.

Lola bit her lip. "I'll go with, but I'm not flying. I hate flying."

Lily wasn't surprised. Lola had refused to get on a broom during their lessons for the past two weeks. The first class she took a detention, the second class she faked sick in the hospital wing.

"Well let's go then!" Lily said with excitement.

The four got up and ran off to the Quidditch Pitch. It was empty, and after placing her ear on Madam Hooch's office door, she could hear that it was empty. She pulled out her wand, and unlocked the door. She snuck inside, and found a locked closet. After unlocking that as well, she found the brooms.

"Here we are!" Lily cheered. She pulled out three brooms, and handed one to each other the boys. When they left the office, Lola was sitting in the stands. "Ok, just don't fly high to where we can be seen," Lily warned. But then she was up in the air, and was zooming around the pitch. This was when she felt free. Flying was one of the greatest things Lily knew.

"Hey, Lil, catch!" Jace yelled. And then he threw a small object toward Lily. The momentum wasn't very big, and it wasn't even near her when it started to fall down. Lily leaned forward and zoomed toward the ground. She caught it easily in the palm of her hand. It was a tiny, red, dusty ball. But Lily knew better. This was one of her uncle George's fireworks. It was undetectable to teachers, who would never suspect such a tiny thing providing a huge explosion.

"That was awesome!" Christian cheered, and Lily could hear Lola clapping from the stands. Christian flew up close to her. "Here, give it me, and I'll throw it. I wanna see how good you are at catching it."

Lily smirked, and she placed it into his palm. "Just don't drop it, or it'll explode."

Christian grinned as she flew away. The next hour consisted of the two boys throwing the small firework for Lily to catch. They started to make it harder, throwing it lighter, farther away, up higher, but Lily didn't miss one.

"You're really good, Lil," Christian complimented as she handed him the firework again.

Lily grinned. "I should be. I've been raised around Quidditch players my whole life."

"Lucky," Christian laughed.

"What are you three doing?"

Lily, Christian, and Jace all jumped with a start. Lily's head whipped toward the ground to see a group of older kids standing on the grass, their brooms in their hands. Lily could recognize the Slytherin Quidditch captain, Aaron Goyle. His brutish face was one that seemed to be repressed fury.

"Get down here!" he yelled to them.

Jace and Christian started to descend to the ground, but Lily didn't move. She flew down lower, but made sure to stay above the ground. She moved closer to the group of boys. "Why should we? What are we doing wrong?" she demanded.

Goyle's eyes glared into hers. "First years aren't allowed brooms."

"These aren't ours," Lily told him airily. "They're Hooch's brooms. So no rule-breaking has taken place."

"This pitch is booked for Slytherin today," he argued. "Our possible teammates need to practice for the tryouts this Sunday."

"We are Slytherins," she quipped. "Once again, no rule-breaking."

"Come on, Lil," Lola spoke shakily, "let's just go. Let 'em practice."

But Lily was stubborn and just stared into the eyes of Goyle.

Goyle sneered. "You wanna play that game, Potter?" he seethed. He snatched the firework out of Christian's hands. Lily had a feeling that he had no idea what it was. "Then play this!" He launched the tiny ball, and it hurled across the pitch.

"You idiot!" Christian yelled.

Lily flipped around and sped toward the falling ball. Lily didn't know what firework it was, how big the explosion was, but with Christian's reaction, she didn't think it was good. She kept her eyes on it as she got closer and closer. But the ball was proving to be faster, and was reaching the ground at a fast pace. Lily placed her body flat against the broom, but the ball was now below her. In a last ditch effort, she threw herself off of the broom and over the firework. She felt her hand close around it, but seconds later she was crashing onto the grass, and pain racked through her body. The air left her as she

finally stopped moving. She was on her side, and she wasn't sure how well she was going to move. But she rolled over onto her back and then held up the firework to show the boys and Lola that she had caught it.

Lily didn't feel like moving. Mainly because she couldn't really feel her back or her left knee. But then a hand was in front of her face, so Lily gingerly took it. Instead of being pulled up gently, she was yanked up off the ground. She swayed a little on her feet, but Aaron Goyle steadied her. Lily stared at him dizzily.

"What? You gunna hit me?" Lily taunted. She placed a hand against her head. A throb was starting in her forehead.

Goyle was quiet for a moment as he looked at her. He looked at the large group of boys. "Go on with practice. I'm gunna take Potter here to the hospital wing," he told them.

Lily glared. "I can get there myself. Besides, I'm fine." To prove her point, Lily moved to take a step, but her knee trembled, and she staggered.

Goyle caught her. Then he knocked both knees out and had her in his arms. "Do what I said. And you three first years go on to the common room or something. Leave the brooms out. These guys will put them back."

Lily was confused by his nice attitude. Aaron Goyle was known to be an ass around Slytherin. She didn't trust him not to drop her. He started to walk, and Lily bit back a groan. With every step he took, his arm brushed against her back, sending a jolt of pain through her veins. But she wasn't going to show him that. So he jostled her all the way back to the castle, and all the way to the hospital wing. Lily rolled her eyes when she heard the whispers of other people. She knew rumors would start soon.

"What happened here?" Madam Pomfrey asked as Goyle laid her down on a bed.

"There was an accident on the Quidditch pitch. One of the guys ran into her while she was bringing the brooms out to us," Goyle told her. Lily was impressed at his lie. He didn't even give a sign that he was lying like a lot of people did.

"What's hurting?" Pomfrey asked her.

"My head, back, and left knee," Lily told her. Pomfrey left her side to go and get something from a shelf.

Goyle rapped his knuckles on the table next to her bed. "I'll be back in a few minutes, Potter. Stay here if you will," he told her. Than without another look, he left the room. Lily watched him leave, but then Madam Pomfrey was shoving a potion under her nose, telling her to take a big gulp. She took three nasty concoctions, and then had at least five different spells cast on her. But to her relief, Lily felt fine, and her back and knee were back to normal. She didn't want to sit around and wait for Goyle, so she left the room, and paced up and down the hallway. It seemed to be forever before he finally showed up.

"Took you long enough," Lily said with a small glare.

Goyle held up his hand. "Relax. I had a long conversation with the headmaster."

Lily tensed. Had he ratted them out? "And?"

Goyle didn't answer her, but instead he waved her over, and then led her down the hall. He was then leading her outside of the castle, and to the edge of Black Lake. There was no one else around, so Lily was careful. She had no idea what he wanted her to follow him for. It could just be a nasty prank, and he just wanted to shove her in the lake.

"Look, Potter," he finally said, "you were really on that broom."

Lily raised a brow. "Thanks. But I'm sure we're not out here just so you can compliment me."

He grinned. "I talked to the headmaster about bending the first years having brooms rule."

Now Lily was confused. "What for?"

"Because I want you to try out for Seeker on Sunday," Goyle told her.

Lily stopped walking. She was dumbfounded. Aaron Goyle, a total sexist and asshole, wanted her, a girl and first year, to try out for the Slytherin Quidditch team?

"What?" she asked.

"I told you. You were good. Look, for the last two years we've had Tyson Derrick as a Seeker. He's a cocky idiot who hates getting himself dirty. He doesn't have the guts to jump off a broom like you did out there. So I want you to come and try out. I want to see who's better," Goyle explained. "So will you be there?"

Lily sighed, but she couldn't help the grin that surfaced. "Yeah, I'll be out there."

"You know that if you make that you'd be up against your brother during our match against Gryffindor," Goyle warned.

Lily's grin became more smug. "That make it even better."

Goyle grinned, as if he liked her attitude. But then he grew a little more serious. "Look, Potter, we haven't had a girl on the Slytherin team for years and years. I'm going to get crap for this, and so are you. Don't let me regret this."

Chapter Three: Gryffindor's Version of Slytherins

At Hogwarts, if there was something that was top secret, everyone knew what it was within an hour. So Lily was surprised when no one knew what she and Aaron Goyle had talked about. Goyle had kept his mouth shut, and so Lily didn't feel a need to tell anyone either. She didn't even mention it to Lola, Jace, or Christian. She decided to keep it a surprise.

So when Lily woke up that Sunday, she didn't get out bed. She kept her eyes closed and blocked out any sounds the other girls made. But soon someone was shaking her shoulder.

"Lily? Lily, wake up. Jace and Christian want us to go watch the tryouts with them. You said that you would go," Lola said as she attempted to wake her up.

Lily didn't acknowledge her, and after another minute, the shaking stopped, and Lola seemed to give up. "Fine, but you better be there. If you leave me with them alone, I will kill you," she threatened.

Lily grinned into her pillow. Soon the other girls had all left, and silence reigned throughout the room. It was relaxing. Lily just wanted to be completely rested, and she also knew that if she went to breakfast, she would hear constant talk about the coming tryouts. She didn't want butterflies like when she was sorted. She wanted to show Goyle that he wasn't going to regret a thing. She wanted to prove that she could play, and that she was better than the rest.

Lily was almost back to sleep when suddenly her curtains were ripped open and light finally reached her eyes.

"Get up, Lily!"

Lily groaned and opened one eye. In front of her bed was a girl with a slim face. Her hair was long and brown, and her eyes were a glaring blue. Lana Goyle, the younger sister of Aaron, and one of Scorpius's best friends. Lily hadn't talked to her very often, but they were on first name base at least.

Lily re-closed her eyes. "What do you want, Lana?" Lily muttered.

"Aaron wanted me to come and wake you up. He said that he suggests that you eat something, and I suggest that you get to the locker room early. My brother hates when people are late," Lana warned.

Lily opened her eyes fully. "When did Aaron tell you about me?"

"This morning," Lana answered. She sat down on the edge of the bed. "And just so you know, I hope you make it. We need a girl on the team, so I'll be cheering for you in the stands."

Lily sighed as she sat up. "Thanks. I'm just going to get something from the kitchens. Do you want to join me?"

Lana shook her head. "Nah. I told Scorp I'd meet him in Great Hall before breakfast ended. I'm supposed to give him the same pep talk I gave him last year before Quidditch tryouts." She rolled her eyes.

Lily chuckled. "Ok then. I'll see you out there then."

"Yup. Later, Lil." Without another look, Lana left the room.

Lily yawned once, but still got up and dressed. She left the common room and stopped by the kitchens. The elves tried to pile her arms with food, but she only took a little, not wanting to throw up or something later. She was munching on an apple as she was walking out of the castle. She headed toward the pitch, examining the weather conditions. It was only a little windy, and the sun was shining brightly. Perfect conditions, and the sun could prove an ally when it came to the glinting material of the Snitch.

Lily walked into the Slytherin locker room just in time to see the door to the captain's office open. Aaron Goyle walked out with a clipboard in his hands. At the sight of her he grinned.

"You're early," he commented.

Lily shrugged. She wasn't going to mention that she was early on his sister's advice. "Yeah. I thought I'd check the weather and get dressed early."

He nodded. "Well, just pick a locker and change. And here," he tossed her a bundle. "That's a practice outfit. It took a while to get one that would fit your size."

Lily tried not to scowl as she pulled the bundle apart. She hated being small.

"And you're using Lana's broom," Aaron told her. He handed her a Nimbus 4000. It was an older model, but still a great model. Lily missed her broom. One her last birthday, she had gotten Firebolt 200. It was the perfect model. It was fast, easy to control, and beautiful.

"Thanks," Lily told him. She set the broom down by a locker, and slipped off her shoes. Then she reached for the hem of her shirt.

Aaron cleared his throat. "Well, I'm going to go out and wait for the others. It's almost time." Lily noticed a little pink on his cheeks. She tried not to laugh. He was embarrassed? They really weren't used to having girls on the team.

Lily dressed into the practice uniform and sighed. It was still just a little bit big on her, but she had to admit that it wasn't too bad. She picked up the broom and walked out of the locker room. A bench had been placed on the edge of the field, so Lily took a seat and laced up her shoes.

"What are you doing here, Potter?" a voice demanded.

Lily looked up to see Tyson Derrick and a group of boys coming toward the locker room. They all had brooms in their hands, and each looked at her with confused looks.

"I'm trying out for Seeker," Lily said casually. She continued to lace her shoes.

But some of the boys scoffed or laughed. "You're trying out for Seeker?" Tyson said with amusement. "First years aren't even allowed brooms."

"Well that rule is being bent for her." They all looked to see Aaron approaching the group. "The headmaster is allowing her to try out with my recommendation."

"Are you out of your mind, Aaron?" Tyson chuckled. "Her? A first year and a girl? Is there anything about those qualities that can be better than me?"

"I hope," Goyle muttered.

Tyson's face darkened a little and gained a scowl. "Whatever. You're the captain. I'll just have to let you see that you wasted your time with her."

The boys all marched off to the locker room. At some point Scorpius had joined the group of boys, and he smirked at her as he passed. Goyle let out a breath and sat down next to Lily.

"Told you that they'd make jokes," he told her.

Lily shrugged. "I don't care. Just let him eat crow after I beat him."

Goyle grinned. "That's the attitude I like to see."

Soon the tryouts were starting, and there was a large crowd of people in the stands. Lily saw some of her family, and she knew that it wasn't just Slytherins that were watching. The other teams were scouting. There were whispers when people saw her in the line with the others.

Aaron Goyle had turned out to be a good and fair captain. When he finally sent out the Seekers, Lily was confident that she could do it, and that he would be fair about it. Their goal was to see who could catch the Snitch in the fastest time, along with the Bludgers being loose. Tyson Derrick went before Lily did, and she now knew what Aaron had been talking about. Tyson avoided any mud, and wouldn't go for the Snitch when it was too close to the grass. Lily saw two times that he could have had it, but completely avoided it because of the mud it was hovering over.

"Ok, Lily, you're up," Aaron told her as he wrote down a time on his clipboard.

Lily took in a deep breath as she rose off the ground. Right away, she flipped to dodge a Bludger. She flew high above the pitch and looked down. She just needed to find a small glint. After a moment,

she found it, hovering by the stands. Lily sped toward it. The Snitch moved quickly away, and people parted as Lily flew between them, her hand outstretched. The Snitch left the stands, and it started to fall toward the ground. Lily nosedived after it, keeping her hand out for it. The Snitch pulled up and floated a foot off the ground. Lily quickly pulled her broom up to avoid crashing into the ground. She made it, but her feet dragged across the grass and mud. But she kept her pace, getting closer and closer to the elusive Snitch. Finally, she felt a cool metal against her palm, and she closed her fingers around it. The Snitch's wing fluttered uselessly through her fingers. Lily landed to a chorus of cheers and applause from the stand. When she made her way back to Aaron, he was grinning like an idiot.

"Good run," he complimented.

Lily grinned back at him and handed him the struggling Snitch. "It was easy," she said with a shrug. She moved back to the bench and took a seat next to Scorpius.

Scorpius nudged her with his shoulder. "Hey, good job out there."

Lily smiled. "Thanks."

"I hope you get put on the team," Scorpius told her. He was the first of the guys to say. "Tyson is too prissy for this game. You're much better."

Lily felt her cheeks heat up a bit. But she ignored it. "I hope you make it too. You did really good out there."

He grinned. "My chances are a bit higher. After all, there are two Chaser openings."

"Aaron's a Chaser?" Lily asked.

Scorpius nodded. "Yeah. With his strength you'd think he'd be a Beater, but he likes being a Chaser apparently." He looked at her broom. "Is that Lana's?"

Lily nodded. "Yeah, it's hers. I'm just using it for the tryout."

"And when you make the team?" Scorpius asked with a grin.

Lily smiled. "Then I send for my broom."

"That reminds me," Scorpius said, "did you ever write to your parents?"

Lily nodded. "Yeah, I wrote to 'em. They said that they're proud of me no matter what, and to ignore my brothers. They said that the other will come around." Lily rolled her eyes.

Scorpius scoffed. "I can't see that happening."

Lily gave a laugh. "Neither can I."

They continued talking as the rest of the tryouts went on. When they had finished, Aaron had them all change and then come out and line up once again.

"Alright, you all did good, but we only need six players. And after careful consideration, I have a team already planned out after watching everyone try out. First, as a Keeper, I've chosen to have Dante Montague retake his position."

A lean fourth year stepped out of the line and stood next to Aaron. His face was smug and handsome, Lily had to admit. He had coal black eyes and wavy dark hair.

"For Chasers, there is myself, Adrian Flint, and Scorpius Malfoy will take his position from last year as well."

Scorpius and a tall boy moved to stand next to Aaron. The other boy was as tall as Aaron, but his face was still babyish, so he had to be younger by a few years. Lily recognized him as the fifth year prefect.

"As for Beaters, Raven Bole and Lars Goyle will retake their positions," Aaron said proudly.

Raven Bole was a burly sixth year with a scowl that seemed permanent on his lips. Lars was Lana's twin brother. He was well-built but Lily knew that his brain wasn't.

"And our Seeker will be Lily Potter," Aaron finished.

Lily grinned as she went to stand next to Scorpius. Scorpius grinned at her and patted her shoulder. The others that hadn't made the team complained at the news, even though most of them hadn't even tried out for Seeker.

"Are you kidding me?" Tyson demanded. "You're picking her over me? Are you out of your mind?"

"She caught it faster and better than you did," Aaron stated.

"Plus she's not some priss," Scorpius taunted.

Lily expected Tyson to at least glare at Scorpius, but he didn't even look at Scorpius. But his scowl toward Aaron deepened. "I can't believe this!"

"Believe it," Aaron said with a scowl of his own. "Unlike you, she's not afraid of getting a little dirty. As long as we win."

Tyson turned his glare to Lily and then stormed off. The rest of the guys all slowly trailed away as well. Aaron ignored them and turned to face the team. "Alright, our first practice will be after classes next Wednesday. By then I'll have a team jersey for each of you. So I expect to see you all then."

It was a clear dismissal to Lily, so she turned and started to leave. She had left Lana's broom in Aaron's office, so she made her way to the edge of the pitch. Scorpius had caught up with her.

"I told you that you'd make the team," he bragged with a grin.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Thank you for the confidence."

He grinned. "Any time, Lily. Any time."

Later that day, Lily had written a letter to her parents, telling her that she had made the Quidditch team, and then asked if they would send her broom as soon as they could. Lola accompanied Lily up to the Owlery.

"Hey, Lily, can I ask you a question?" Lola asked. "One that might seem a little weird."

Lily sighed. "Go ahead."

"Well . . . I was wondering . . . how are you able to be so casual around Scorpius Malfoy? I mean, I'm not afraid of him or anything, but he's older and . . . he's almost like a king among Slytherins, what with his family's name."

Lily raised a brow. Was that why the older kids seemed to always show respect to him when he badmouthed them to their faces? So she shrugged. "I just am. I see no reason to treat him any different from anyone else. He's just a person."

Lola looked at her with wide eyes. Slowly she relaxed. "Hm. Maybe it's because you don't have a family of Slytherins like the rest of us do."

Lily almost rolled her eyes. "Yeah. Maybe."

When they entered the Owlery, Lily whistled, and her owl, Regal, flew down to rest on her shoulder. Her father had bought him before she came to Hogwarts. He took the letter in his beak, and after Lily briefed him on where to go, he took off, flying out to the distance.

As the days passed, Lily started to feel a little less restless. With classes, homework, and Quidditch practices, Lily found herself always busy. Aaron had been right. Most of the guys on the team seemed hesitant about having a girl on the team. Aaron and Scorpius were the only relaxed ones about it. Her parents had sent her broom, and Lily was thankful to have it. It was much faster, and it made practices easier.

October had really gone by in a flash, and soon it was Halloween. Everyone was excited for the feast and the decorations, but Lily was more tense than anything. Because today was James's birthday.

"What are you going to do?" Lola asked at breakfast when Lily had explained her downcast attitude.

Lily sighed. "I don't know. Honestly, I completely forgot that his birthday was coming up. I haven't talked to him since the first day of classes."

"You should get him a gift," Jace told her. "You may be fighting, but he's still your brother, and it's his birthday."

Lily hummed quietly. "Yeah, that's where my mind's been lately." But Lily's only problem was that she had nothing to give to James as a present. But later that day, Lily had decided that she would at least say 'Happy Birthday' to him.

"This place looks awesome!" Jace said as they entered the Great Hall for the feast the night. Bats were fluttering around near the ceiling, and some were a bit lower, and there were pumpkins that a group of first years could sit in.

The three took seats near the middle of the Slytherin table, and were soon joined by Scorpius and Lana.

"Nice of you to join us," Lily said to Scorpius with a grin. "Getting tired of listening to the other third year boys grunts?"

Lana hid her laugh behind her hand, but Scorpius didn't hide his. "Actually, Lana here was tired of it, so I suggested sitting here. What place could be better than by our own Lily Potter?" Then he paused, his brow scrunching as he took a bit of his food. Then he asked, "What is your middle name?"

Lily raised a brow. "Why?"

Scorpius grinned. "Well, I think you should have a nickname, but I can't think of one. So perhaps your middle name will help me think of one."

"Why do I need a nickname?" Lily asked with a sigh.

"He gives one to everyone," Lana said with a roll of her eyes.

Lily looked at Scorpius's pleading look, so she gave up. "It's Luna. Lily Luna Potter."

Scorpius's brow furrowed again. "Hmm . . ." he hummed as he thought. "Lily Luna. Lily Luna. I kind of like that."

"Like what?" Lily asked.

"Lily Luna. Does anyone ever call you that?" Scorpius asked.

Lily grinned. "Only when I'm in trouble." Scorpius laughed, but Lily continued. "What's your middle name?"

Scorpius sobered a bit, and his eyes strayed to his plate. "It's stupid. I don't really like it."

"Scorpius Hyperion Malfoy." Lana squealed with laughter.

Scorpius glared. "Shut it, Lana Crabbe Goyle."

Lana stopped laughing, and her cheeks flushed red. "Not funny. It's not my fault my dad thought he had twin boys."

Jace busted into laughter, and Scorpius joined him. Lola bit back a smile, and kicked Jace under the table. Lily let her grin show, but she didn't laugh. "So, you got your middle name from your dad's friend that died, right?" Lily was sure she had heard stories about someone named Crabbe.

Lana nodded. "Yeah, and I love it," she said, sarcasm thick in her voice.

Lily chuckled. "I got my name from my parents' friend. Actually, her sons are in your year."

"Who are they?" Scorpius asked.

"Lorcan and Lysander Scamander," Lily told them.

"Those two weirdos?" Scorpius said bluntly. Lily giggled, and Scorpius looked apologetic. "Oh, sorry."

Lily shook her head. "No, I know they're weird. Everyone does. But I still love them. They are my god brothers."

"How'd they take to your new house?" Lola asked.

Lily shrugged. "Actually, I haven't talked to them since before school started."

"Yeah, aren't they like Hufflepuffs or something?" Lana asked.

"Ravenclaws," Scorpius corrected. He looked at Lily. "They're both the Ravenclaw Beaters."

Lily looked at the Ravenclaw table, and soon she spotted the two boys amongst a group of friends. "No surprise. They both have so much energy." As she started to look away, she caught sight of James and the others at the Gryffindor table. Some girl patted James's shoulder, and another boy was leaning toward the group, saying something to James. Lily noticed that James was wearing a necklace, something she'd never seen him wear before. She assumed that it was a birthday gift.

Scorpius seemed to know where she was looking. "Have you talked to your brother? I've heard too many times today about how it's his birthday."

Lily shook her head. "No, I haven't. I've decided to at least tell him happy birthday"

"You're brave," Lana murmured.

Lily thought the same thing as she left the Great Hall after the feast had ended. She had lost sight of James and the others, and she had no idea how to get to the Gryffindor common room. But she spotted two older kids with Gryffindor ties, so she followed their steps. They kept going up and up, something Lily wasn't used to. It seemed like forever until the two kids stopped walking. They stood in front of a portrait with a fat lady in a pink dress. One of them said something, and the portrait moved to show a hole in the wall. Lily assumed this was the entrance to their common room.

"Hey!" Lily called.

The two kids stopped and looked at her. The boy pulled his foot out of the hole. They looked curious at first, but when they noticed her Slytherin tie, their eyes became hostile. "What are you doing spying on us?" the girl hissed.

Lily didn't show the nerves that were fluttering through her skin. Instead, she looked the girl in the eye. "I need you to tell James Potter to come out here for me. I have to talk to him."

The boy was still hostile, but now also looked hesitant. "What would a Slytherin want with James, besides to try and hex him?"

Lily was about to speak when another voice joined them. "What's going on here?"

Lily turned around to see something that she actually recognized. It was Zack Creevey, one of the Creevey twins. They were a year older than she was. He had dirty blonde hair that swam around his ears, and his eyes were a shocking blue color.

"This Slytherin wants to talk to James," the girl sneered.

Zack finally came up next to Lily, and then he smiled. "Oh, hey, Lily," he greeted. "I haven't talked to you in what seems like forever. Here to wish your bro a happy birthday?"

Lily looked back at the other two and grinned. "Yes, actually. I haven't talked to him yet today." She almost laughed when she saw the horror-stricken looks on the other twos' faces.

"I'll get him for you," Zack told her.

Lily grinned at him. "Thank you, Zack."

Zack smiled at her, and then moved past the other two to enter their common room. The other two Gryffindors shook out their stupor and followed him. The portrait closed, but opened again moments later, and James came out. His body was tense, and his face was hesitant. Lily suddenly felt very stupid for coming here. He was probably still mad at her. Not that Lily was happy with him yet either.

"What do you want?" James mumbled.

Lily bit her lip before letting out a sigh. "Well, I thought I would wish you a happy birthday. I do every year, why break the habit." Lily almost smacked herself. The least she could have done was keep the sarcasm out of her words.

James didn't look at her. "Thanks. And I um . . . didn't tell you that you did a good job, making the Slytherin team. I've never seen a girl on their team."

Lily nodded. "Thanks. Aaron Goyle wanted me to try out, so I did. Apparently Tyson was too prissy and hated getting dirty."

"Yeah, well Derrick is the typical Slytherin. Hates getting his hands dirty," James muttered.

Lily drew in a slow breath, not wanting to get furious over the dig at her House. She wasn't sure if James even remembered that it was her House now too. "Actually, I was referring to how he hated getting mud on his clothes."

James shrugged. "So he's both. Whatever."

"So, it's not just a few of them. You really do hate anyone who's a Slytherin," Lily accused quietly.

James finally looked at her. "I don't hate you."

"Do you like my friends? Do you hate them? I hang out with Lola Pritchard and Jace Pucey," Lily demanded, the fury rising.

James looked disgusted. "You're hanging out with a Pritchard?"

"She's one of the nicest girls I know, and she's my best friend!" Lily defended.

James gave a groan. "Have you met her sister?"

"Yeah, and I thought she was perfectly lovely," Lily retorted. She wouldn't say it out loud, but Lily did think she was a bit too bossy.

"Are you out of your mind?" he demanded.

Lily scoffed. "What if I said I spend time with Scorpius Malfoy?" Lily knew she had pushed a forbidden button as she spoke, but she lost any care.

James looked angry and horrified. "What!" he roared. "Are you crazy? You're hanging out with that git! He's a complete ass! He picks on little kids, and always plays dirty! Of all the people . . . !"

"At least he can accept that I'm a Slytherin!" Lily scathed. "He doesn't rip on me for being a Potter or a Weasley!"

"That's it!" James said with finality. "I'm writing Mum and Dad. You've got to be out of your mind! Being in that House has completely changed you, Lily!"

Lily glared at him. "No, you changed! You changed your mind about me when I became a Slytherin! That's what's changed. You think you've lost your sister to a dirty House, but you just won't say it out loud!"

"Fine! I've lost my sister! She got put in the worst House possible! I'd rather her be a Squib! And now, I don't think I have a sister at all anymore!" James yelled.

Lily glared at him defiantly. She wasn't going to let him see how his words had hurt her. Lily pulled in a breath. "Well fine then, Potter. Happy birthday, and I hope that you live after we crush you in our upcoming match."

Lily spun on her heel and marched away, not giving him a chance to speak. She heard him retreat into his common room before she had turned the corner. His words had hurt her immensely. No matter how mad she was at him, she would have never denied that he was her brother, and she would have never imagined that he would do such a thing. He had been her favorite, the one she always ran too when she was scared and their dad wasn't home. It looked like that was no longer an option.

When Lily entered the Slytherin common room, she scanned the room. She found Scorpius sitting with a few other third years, including Lana and her twin. Lily made her way over to them, and Scorpius smirked when he saw her coming.

"Hey there, Lily Luna. How'd it go with your brother?" he asked. There was no malice in his voice, no amusement. But Lily had a feeling that he knew exactly how it went.

Lily took in a small breath, happy that it wasn't shaky. "What brother?" she asked him innocently.

Scorpius's smirk never left as he stood up and held out his hand. "Welcome, Lily, to the Gryffindors' version of Slytherins," he welcomed.

Lily grinned and shook his hand.

Chapter Four: Playing Dirty

The time for the match of Slytherin versus Gryffindor had snuck up on both teams, making them constantly fight on who got to practice on what days. No one knew exactly what was said during Lily and James's fight, but everyone was aware of the tension between the two. Lily had taken to not acknowledging her brother, or most of her family in fact. The only one she seemed to talk to was Hugo, and that was when one was trying to get a rise out of the other. It usually ended in one of them hexing the other.

To Lily's surprise, she hadn't gotten a letter from her parents concerning Scorpius, so Lily had the feeling that James had been bluffing. He couldn't tell them much without telling them about the whole fight.

"What a pansy," Scorpius had laughed when Lily told him of her suspicion.

Lily had taken to hanging around Scorpius Malfoy more often, partly because it annoyed her brothers, which she knew Scorpius enjoyed as well, but mainly because he was a good guy. He made her laugh, and she never dwelled on what her brother had said. And his calling her Lily Luna actually had spread, and now most of the Slytherins called her that, except for Jace and Lola. Lana didn't call her that either, just to go against Scorpius.

When the day of the match actually came, Lily chose to eat a full meal, but not enough to where she would end up throwing up. Part of her was a bit afraid. Aaron had briefed the team on the Gryffindor players, and told her that she would be going up against Albus. Lily had gulped. She knew Albus was a good Seeker. She had seen him play at home. She didn't know if she could actually beat him.

Lola seemed to read her mind. "Don't worry about Albus," she told Lily. "You're smaller, so you might be faster."

"Yeah," Jace agreed. "And if you're not, just tackle him off his broom."

Finally, Lily cracked a smile.

Later that afternoon, Lily was sitting with the rest of the team in the locker room. Aaron was pacing in front of them, trying to find the words he wanted to say. "Alright, team. This is the biggest game for us. We've lost the past few years, but this time I think we can do it. We actually have a good Seeker." He grinned at Lily. "And from what I hear, little Albus is a little shook up about having to go against his sister. Any hesitation he shows could be the key. But James Potter's been pretty aggressive the past few days, so I need the other Chasers to watch out and be careful."

"Yeah, sorry about that," Lily joked. The others laughed.

Aaron finally smiled. "Alright. Let's head out."

They all walked out into the stadium and toward the middle. The Gryffindor team had already come out and had been announced.

"And on the Slytherin team, Captain Aaron Goyle, Adrian Flint, and Scorpius Malfoy are playing as Chasers. Dante Montague is back as Keeper, just as Raven Bole and Lars Goyle are back as the Beaters. And the new popular player is their Seeker, Lily Potter. The first girl on the Slytherin team in a long time." Meredith Macmillan, an older Gryffindor, was commentating the games.

The teams made it to the middle, and Madam Hooch stood in the middle, the ball crate at her feet, and the Quaffle in her hands. The teams glared at each other. Lily caught Albus's eye, and Aaron had been right. He seemed hesitant.

"I want a clean game," Madam Hooch told them. "Captains shake hands."

Aaron and a burly sixth year Gryffindor that Lily was sure was Corbin Wood, walked forward and tensely shook hands. When they parted, they were both flexing their fingers.

"Mount your brooms," Madam Hooch called when the captains rejoined their lines. Lily mounted hers as she scanned the Gryffindor team. It consisted mainly of her family members. James and Rose were both Chasers, Lucy the Keeper, Fred was a Beater, and Albus of course was their Seeker.

Suddenly, Madam Hooch gave a loud shrill with her whistle, and they all rose in the air. The Bludgers and Snitch were released, and the Quaffle was in the air. The game had begun.

"And James Potter had grabbed the Quaffle, and he's making a beeline for the goals. But Aaron Goyle is on his tail," Meredith spoke.

Lily flew up above the other players. Albus had done the same, but they stayed far away from each other. But Lily let her eyes stray toward her brother every so often. If he saw it, Lily was going to do her best to catch it first. But after a few minutes, Lily noticed that he was looking at her too, and when she caught his eye, he quickly looked away.

"The score is ten to ten, and Slytherin is in possession," Meredith said as the game continued. "It's a rough game so far. Malfoy's taking the Quaffle up the middle, but Rose Weasley steals the ball, but oh! She takes a Bludger to the shoulder, shot by Lars Goyle. Flint catches the ball and shoots off toward the Gryffindor goals. He makes it there, throws the Quaffle and . . . he scores," Meredith didn't sound all too happy. "Twenty to ten, Slytherin in the lead."

Suddenly, a glint of gold caught her eye, and Lily zoomed off toward it. But Albus had seen it too, and they were soon neck and neck, and both had a hand stretched out. But then James was in front of them, and they both ran into him. Albus wobbled, and Lily almost fell off her broom completely. The Snitch was gone.

"You can do better than her, Al!" James yelled as he flew away. The Slytherin team was yelling complaints, but Madam Hooch didn't call a foul, for they had both hit him. Lily was fuming. James was complaining about Scorpius playing dirty, but then he pulls this? Albus nodded at his brother, and then threw his shoulder into Lily as he went past her. Lily bit back the urge to take Jace's advice and tackle him. But both of them flew back up to resume their search from above.

"After a brief interruption by James Potter," the Slytherin crowd started to chant 'cheater', "we're back in the game, with Rose Weasley in possession."

The game continued for another hour and a half, and neither Lily nor Albus had caught sight of the Snitch again. The game was proving to be an even match.

"Goyle scores another ten points for Slytherin," Meredith said glumly. "That makes the score one hundred and forty to one hundred and ten, with Gryffindor in the lead." Those words seemed to cheer her up.

Lily was getting worried. The Gryffindor was stepping up their game, and Albus seemed much more alert. Words from the others started to come into her mind. "Just tackle him off his broom." "Any hesitation he shows could be the key." ". . . always plays dirty." Suddenly, Lily knew how she could make sure Albus wouldn't get the Snitch, but it would be a dirty tactic. She looked at her brother and thought back to the stunt James had pulled earlier, and how Albus had reacted toward her afterward. She didn't care anymore. She turned toward Albus and flashed through the air, she went past him and then went down into a dive. She carefully looked back, and just like she thought, Albus was following her.

"And it seems as if Lily Potter has seen the Snitch!" Meredith practically screamed. "Come on, Albus!" She wasn't the only one yelling. Most of the crowd was. Some of the other players had forgotten about their positions, and the Slytherin Chasers made three goals before the Gryffindor team was shaken back into the game. The game had tied now.

Quickly, Lily was getting closer to the ground, and Albus was still following her. Lily was starting to lose her nerves the closer the ground got, but she kept going. And when she was barely a foot above the ground, she pulled up sharply. Albus wasn't as lucky, and he crashed into the ground, rolling off his broom and skidding across the grass. There was a collective gasp among the crowd and the players. The voices that spoke became hysterical when Albus didn't get up. Lily ignored it all and flew back up into the air.

"Albus Potter is down after a dirty trick from the Slytherin Seeker," Meredith seethed. The Slytherin team cheered happily as Lily flew a lap past them. She caught Scorpius's eye, and he had his famous smirk on his lips.

"Good job," he said as she flew past him.

Lily smiled as she rose above the players. The game had started back to its fast pace, but Lily watched as Albus was levitated out of the pitch. Lily sighed as she lazily flew around the pitch. They didn't bring out another Seeker, and Lily wasn't surprised. In her mind, she thought that they had assumed Albus would be the best. They didn't think that he'd fall for a trick she played. So now, she had all the time and relaxation she wanted.

As the game went on, Lily saw the Snitch three or four times, but she didn't pursue it. She just kept above the air, and dodge a few Bludgers that went her way. A few times Lars Goyle had come up to bat them away.

"Way to go, Lily Luna," he told her once.

Lily grinned. "Just playing like a Gryffindor's Slytherin." Over the weeks since her and James's fight, Lily had learned what a Gryffindor's Slytherin was. Basically, it was just when you acted like what Gryffindors thought a Slytherin was. Sneaky, cunning, or 'dirty'. It was a common term among the older students.

Currently the game was a hundred and forty to a hundred and ninety. In their excitement about Albus's fall, the rest of the Slytherin team had started to overwhelm the Gryffindors. And Lily noticed that the Gryffindor team looked a bit panicky after their Seeker was knocked out.

After what seemed like forever, Aaron finally left the other Chasers, and flew next to Lily. "Hey, next time you see the Snitch, just go for it. We've got this in the bag," he said with a laugh.

Lily laughed too. "Alright. I'll get easy."

Aaron was laughing as he flew back into the game. Lily went back to actually looking for the Snitch. After a while, she laughed again. Find the Snitch was much harder when you weren't actually trying. But she finally caught a glint of gold hovering above the stands. Lily took off for it. Meredith didn't comment on it, but people had noticed, and the Slytherin team was cheering loudly. Lily followed the Snitch as it zoomed over the crowd, and then turned off onto the field. Lily stretched out her hand and snatched it out of the air on her turn. The Slytherin cheers seemed to deafen her.

"And Lily Potter catches the Snitch. The game ends with Gryffindor with one hundred and forty, and Slytherin three hundred and forty. Slytherin wins," Meredith said with a pout in her tone.

Lily landed on the ground, the Snitch still clutched in her hand. The rest of the team landed, and instantly surrounded her. Lars and Scorpius had hoisted her onto their shoulders. Lily grinned as she noticed the Gryffindor team landing.

"Hey, Potter!" she yelled across the field. The field seemed to quiet a little as she yelled. James looked back at her, his eyes full of anger. Lily grinned. "Thanks for congratulating about making the team. I couldn't have done it without your confidence!" she told him loudly.

The Slytherin team and crowd had bursted into laughter. Scorpius and Lars almost dropped her they laughed so hard. James glared furiously at her, and had to be herded into their locker room by Fred.

The two boys carried Lily to the locker room, but put her down so that she could go into the girls' room and change. Lily felt as if she were on an adrenaline high as she changed back into her clothes. She had never felt so giddy in her life. Winning that game had been exhilarating! She left the locker room to see that Scorpius was waiting for her with a smirk.

"That was a brilliant play," he told her.

Lily laughed. "Yes, I thought so too. But I wasn't sure if Potter would be stupid enough to follow after me."

Scorpius chuckled. "I'm not sure if I've ever seen anything so satisfying as him crashing to the ground. Are you going to go visit him?" he mocked.

Lily scoffed. "If the wounded kitty wants me to visit, he'll ask for me."

Scorpius laughed at the shot against Albus. Soon Jace, Lola, and Lana found them.

"That was an amazing game!" Jace cheered.

"And of course they're throwing a party in the common room," Lana told them.

"Then what are we waiting for?" Scorpius said with a grin.

Lily was exhausted the next day. The party was fun, but Lily spent a lot time talking with other Slytherins who wanted to congratulate her on catching the Snitch and, most of all, for knocking out Albus. Lily had accepted it, but she didn't get to bed until late, and she was trying her best not to fall asleep at breakfast.

For the next few weeks, an older Slytherin accompanied Lily in the halls. The Gryffindors were proving to be sore losers, and they tried to send most of their anger and hexes toward Lily. Even James had confronted her before one of her classes. He didn't say a word, but had just loomed over her, glaring. After a moment, he walked away. Lily expected to see a teacher, something to explain why he just walked away, but there was nobody else there.

Albus was let out of the Hospital Wing two days after the game. Lily didn't actually talk to him, but rumors had reached her that he was furious with what she did. As he had apparently worded it, "she was just another dirty snake." Lily had laughed when Lars Goyle told her this.

December came up on them quick, and also passed in a cold blur, and soon they were all getting ready to leave for the holidays. Lily and the other first years were relieved. Teachers seemed to love adding on extra homework before the holidays came, and they needed the break. But Lily almost considered not going home at all. She wasn't sure if it was worth it to go home, knowing that she would have to face her brothers practically every day, and she knew that trouble would brew. But when Professor Longbottom came around with the sign-up sheet for those staying for the holidays, Lily let it pass over her.

"So, Lily Luna," Scorpius asked one day at breakfast, "what does your family do at Christmas?"

"Well, we all go to my grandparents' house on Christmas Eve, we stay the night, and then spend Christmas there as well," Lily explained. "It's always really crowded, because sometimes other come over as well."

"Like?" he prodded.

"The Scamanders come over a lot. The Finnigans have joined us a few times, and so have Cody Thomas and his parents," Lily listed. "And there's already a lot of us, so you add more, and it gets kinda hectic." She looked at him. "What does your family do?"

"Well, on Christmas morning, I wake up and open presents with my parents and grandparents, and then my aunt, uncle, and cousins. Then we open more presents there, and have a big formal dinner that night. A little boring really," Scorpius mused.

"At least you get to hang around your cousins," Lily said. "Or are they younger?"

"Younger, but Tanner's only a year younger, so I mostly talk with him," Scorpius told her.

Lily bit her lip in thought. "Wait, Tanner Zabini?"

Scorpius grinned. "Yeah, that's my cousin. He's got three younger siblings, but they're really little."

"At least you have one person to be around," Lily replied.

"Well, more come over," Scorpius told her. "It's not just the Malfoys and Zabinis that have dinner together."

"What do you mean?" Lily asked.

"Well, the Goyles come over as do the Flints, the Averys, and the Montagues," Scorpius said as he ticked them off his fingers. "So the dinner gets a little crowded, but it's pretty quiet otherwise."

"Well at least you're not related to them all. I have to put with them all for two days, and still see them afterwards," Lily reminded him.

Scorpius gave her a mock sympathetic look. "I hope you make it through the den of lions."

Lily gave a fake shudder. "I just hope lions don't eat snakes."

The train ride back to King's Cross was much more fun than the ride to Hogwarts had been, mainly because she didn't have to listen to her brothers gush about Houses and Hogsmeade. Instead she was sitting in a compartment with Lola and Jace, and a huge pile of sweets in the middle of the compartment.

"Finally, a long break with no homework!" Jace groaned as he stretched across the seat. He was sitting across the girls, and no had his legs stretched out along the seat.

The girls giggled. Lily sighed as she picked up a Chocolate Frog. She took a bite out of the frog, but out of habit, she took a look at the card. She wasn't a collector, but Hugo was, and she always gave the cards to him. What was she going to do with Falco Aesalon now? Could she force herself to give it to Hugo? She doubted he would take it anyway. He had been particularly furious with her about the Quidditch match.

"Are you going to keep that card?" Lola asked.

Lily raised a brow. "You collect them?"

Lola laughed. "No, but some of my brothers do. I like seeing them argue over who gets what card. Sometimes they end up in fist fights." She rolled her eyes.

Lily laughed. But she kept onto the card. "Actually, I think I'm going to keep this one."

Lola only shrugged as she opened her own Chocolate Frog. Lily shoved the card into her pocket.

Upon reaching King's Cross, Lola grabbed Lily in a tight hug. "You'd better write. I don't think I can handle having to deal with my brothers again. I'll need help to get through it," she told her.

Lily laughed as she pulled back from the hug. "Right back at you."

Lola looked toward Jace, and her face was a bit tighter. "Have a good Christmas, big ears," she taunted.

Lily rolled her eyes, but Jace smiled widely. "And you, dirty." Then he turned to Lily and gave her a quick hug. "I'll probably flood your house with letters. As an only child I tend to get very bored."

Lily smiled. "Don't worry, I'll just throw a few of them in the fireplace," she teased.

Jace grinned. "As long as you write one back. Goodbye, you two." And with a nod, he turned and walked away.

Lily looked back at Lola. "Perhaps I can get my parents to let you stay over. Have a good Christmas."

"Hurry up, Lola!" Lola's sister yelled from behind them.

Lola ignored her. "You too, Lily. Bye."

"Bye." Lily watched as Lola walked off toward her older sister. Lily sighed and made her way through the crowd and looked for her family. But soon it wasn't hard to see her uncle Ron's red hair over the top of the crowd. But before she could get there, someone had grabbed her wrist. Lily turned around to see the handsome face of Scorpius Malfoy. On his lips was his usual smirk.

"Glad I caught you, Lily Luna," he said with amusement.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Caught me is right." He let go, and she started walking, but Scorpius kept pace with her. "So what did you want?" she asked.

"I just wanted to wish you a happy Christmas, and to ask you what you want me to send you? I have no idea what to get you," Scorpius replied.

Soon Lily's family came into sight, so Lily stopped walking. She wanted to avoid a fight. Scorpius stopped as well, but she knew that he noticed her family as well.

"How about you don't get me anything," Lily suggested. "It's not necessary."

Scorpius waved off the idea. "I guess I'll just have to surprise you. Have a happy Christmas," he told her. And then, probably to spite

her brothers, Scorpius Malfoy wrapped her into a hug. Lily felt her cheeks heat up a bit, but she hugged him back. When he pulled away, Lily noticed that his cheeks were a little pink as well. He handed her a small box.

"Happy Christmas, Lily Luna," he said once again.

Lily smiled. "Happy Christmas, Scorpius," she murmured.

With one last smirk, Scorpius turned around and walked away. Lily watched until he was lost in the crowd, and then she looked back at the box. She flipped it over and read the label. 'Crystalized Pineapple'. How had he known she liked it? But she only grinned and shook her head. She shoved the small box into her jacket pocket. It stuck out a little, but it didn't fall as she walked toward her family once again.

"Looks like Lily's got a little boyfriend," Hugo mocked, his brow furrowed.

"Like Hell she does!" James growled.

Lily ignored him, but she looked toward Hugo. "Don't worry, Hugo. I'm sure you'll get one as well someday."

She heard a few sniggers, and Hugo's ears turned a bright red. He opened his mouth to reply, but was cut off by his mother.

"Children, enough," Hermione told them, setting a hand on Hugo's shoulder. He looked as if a hundred pounds had been placed on him, and he shut his mouth.

"Besides, Lily does not have a boyfriend," Harry muttered.

Lily bit back a smile. "Of course, Dad. I'm only eleven, and no one's that lucky."

"I would put anything past a Slytherin, Dad," Albus seethed calmly.

This time Lily had to bite back hurt along with anger.

Lily was tense the entire ride home, and as soon as she had entered the house she took her things to her room and stayed there. After

everything that Albus had said, Lily didn't want to see her brothers at all.

And she stayed in her room for almost two days, only leaving to use the bathroom. She had Kreacher bring her meals to her, and to take them back. Lily wrote to the others, giving brief note on how she was herself. The only person who came up to see her was Teddy. He never spoke of the others, or about how she was her House. He asked about classes and her friends. Lily told him everything, happy to have someone in her family to talk to. There was someone in her family that she could still trust.

"You should write me more often," he told her on the second day.

Lily decided to tease him. "And why is that?"

Teddy smiled. "Because then you won't have to bottle it up, and then bottle yourself up here until you explode," he replied.

Lily rolled her eyes. "I'm not going to explode."

But Teddy just shrugged. "I worry." His tone let Lily know that the words were a lie. It wasn't him that was worried. It was everyone else. Her parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and probably Victoire. Teddy never worried about her. He knew she'd talk to him about anything.

He didn't say anything else on the matter. He changed the subject to Quidditch, but then soon excused himself.

On the third day back, Lily finally left her room. She just wanted to act as if nothing had happened, as if she hadn't spent almost forty-eight hours in her room. But as soon as she came down for lunch, her mother was immediately fussing over her. She tried to get Lily to talk about it, but Lily didn't want to. She didn't think her mum would understand.

Her father came home an hour or so after lunch, and he was happy to see his daughter out and about. He too tried to talk to her about everything, but Lily kept silent.

At dinner, Lily decided to risk her refusal to talk.

"Mum, Dad," she addressed.

"Yes?" Harry asked.

Lily momentarily bit her lip, but then she steeled her nerves. "I've been writing to a friend of mine the last two days," she started. "Her name's Lola Pritchard. I was wondering if she could stay over for a day or two?"

Lily noticed that her brothers looked cross at the idea, but both of her parents smiled. "I don't have a problem with that," Harry told her with a smile.

So the next day, Lily waited in the living room for Lola to come. Her brothers hung around too, but with sullen looks. They didn't say a word to her. When a knock finally sounded, Lily hurried to the door. Upon opening it she found Lola standing there with a bag, her cheeks pink.

"My father Apparated me a few blocks away," she told her. "He walked back after we found the house."

Lily grinned and shook her head. "Well come into the kitchen. My mum wants to meet you."

Lily led her into the kitchen to introduce Lola, but then both girls quickly stole off to Lily's room.

"So, how have the last few days been for you?" Lola asked.

Lily sighed. "I'm ignored by both of my brothers, and fussed over by my parents. It's been great!" she mocked.

Both girls laughed. "My little siblings haven't left me alone. They repeatedly ask questions about Hogwarts. Especially Johnny," Lola complained.

"Why does he ask a lot?" Lily asked curiously.

Lola hesitated. "Well, . . . he really wants to go to Hogwarts too."

Lily wasn't surprised. She had been like that too. But she didn't understand why Lola seemed so guarded about the subject. But she

didn't want to keep the thick air. "So, how many siblings do you have?"

"Ten."

"Are you serious?" Lily said in astonishment. Her own grandmother had only seven children.

Lola nodded grimly. "Yeah, seven boys and four girls including me. It's a mess."

"I'd imagine," Lily agreed. "This place is a mess with just two boys!"

"Well, my mum said that she wanted a big family since she was an only child. I have no cousins at all, so all the siblings make up for it, I guess."

"Well, I have nine cousins, I think," Lily said, trying to count in her head. "So I think that there's thirteen of us, counting Teddy of course."

"Ever wish you were an only child too?" Lola asked.

Lily sighed again. "Not until recently."

Chapter Five: Family Advice

Having Lola over had been the best part of Lily's Christmas break so far, and she was disappointed that she had to leave the day before Christmas Eve. Lola had written a letter to her parents, asking if she could stay with the Potter for Christmas, but as Lola sulkily said, "they think it's better if I am with family."

So when Lily watched Lola leave with her father, she felt the urge to run back to her room and hide until the break was over. She didn't want to deal with her brothers alone. When Lola was here, they were forced by their mother to be absolutely nice, but now that she was gone, Lily felt like she was free game. She soon found that she was right.

When she walked through the living room to get to the stairs, James was flipping through a magazine on the couch. He saw her, and sneered. "So what's next, Lil? You gunna pollute our house by inviting over Malfoy?"

Lily ignored his comment, and continued toward the stairs. She made it up the hall without hearing another comment, but as Albus walked by her, she slammed her shoulder with his, making her stumble briefly. She bit back the urge to jump him, and continued on to her room. When she got to her room, she couldn't help but to slam her door behind her in anger.

The next few days before Christmas Eve were tense among the three siblings. At every dinner, Lily ate quickly and excused herself before the rest of the family was even halfway done with their own plates. When her parents tried to coax her into talking, Lily kept quite and politely shot them down. She didn't feel like discussing it with them. They wouldn't understand how it felt to be an outcast in the family.

When Christmas Eve came around, Lily packed a bag with enough things to last her two days with her family at her grandparents' house. Inside, she was dreading the nights. The children all slept downstairs on the floor together, while one got the couch, and another got the armchair. Usually, they settled who got what by some sort of game. Lily was just going to keep to the floor. She didn't want to start any fights.

When someone knocked on her door, Lily almost stayed silent. But instead she invited them in, and her mother stepped inside her room, closing the door behind her.

"Got your things ready, sweetheart?" Ginny asked. She moved around to sit on the edge of Lily's bed, watching as Lily put more things into her bag.

"Pretty much. I've got all of my clothes, and I've got a few things to keep myself entertained," Lily said casually.

"Entertained? Isn't that why we bring your brothers?" Ginny joked. "You've never had to bring something, you and Hugo always find ways to be entertained, or you and James tease your brother."

Lily sighed. This was the first hint that her mother was trying to get her to talk. So Lily shrugged. "Things are a bit different this year. I suspect it'll be a bit boring on my end."

Ginny nodded. "So, I hear you've become friends with the Malfoy boy. What's his name?"

Lily took at a look at her mother, who was grinning. "Scorpius. And yeah, he's a friend. We've gotten to know each other, what with being in the same House, and on the Quidditch team."

"Will I get to meet him sometime?" her mother asked.

Lily scoffed. "Not unless you want to give Dad a heart attack. You know how he is, and not to mention how both James and Albus hate Slytherins."

"Not all of them, I'm sure," Ginny protested.

"I haven't met one they like," Lily mumbled.

"I think I'm looking at one," Ginny murmured.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Mum, have you not . . ." Lily paused, trailing off. She wanted to kick herself. She almost started to talk. She looked at her mother dully. "Haha. You almost got me."

"So why stop?" Ginny questioned lightly. Her eyes were serious though as she looked at her daughter. "What's going on with you, Lily?"

Lily sighed, frustrated. "Nothing is wrong with me!" She threw another book into her bag. "It's the others. Once I became a Slytherin, it's like everything's different! Practically all of them have changed, just because I'm a Slytherin. James and Albus can't stand the sight of me, and Hugo and I are always yelling and sending hexes at each other. The rest of them don't even talk to me!" she ranted. Once she had finished, Lily hated to admit it, but she felt a little better. Like a weight had lifted.

"You just have to let them get used to it. And from what I've gathered, you said a few hurtful things as well. I think both sides are even," Ginny replied.

Lily blew out a breath. "Well they started it, so they can finish it," she grumbled. She kept her mouth shut after that.

Her mum smiled softly. "Come down when you're ready then, sweetie. We'll leave soon." Ginny kissed her daughter's forehead, and then left the room. The door shut behind her with a finality.

Lily pulled in a breath as she zipped up her bag. Inside, she wasn't sure if she wanted to be with the family yet. She wasn't sure exactly what the others thought, what Rose, or Lucy, or Molly, or Dominique thought. Lily chewed on her bottom lip with worry. To be honest and fair, she'd been avoiding Rose. Rose was always hanging around Albus, and Lily didn't want to start anything.

But soon Lily couldn't act like she was packing, so she took her bag downstairs, and sat on the couch. Her brothers were there as well, but they stayed on the other side of the room, and they all ignored each other.

"You kids ready?" Harry asked with a smile as he and Ginny walked in. He seemed to notice the tension in the air between his kids, but he paid no mind to it, and made the decision to talk to his daughter.

"Yeah," all three kids mumbled.

"Are we Flooing in?" James asked.

"Yep, it's a bit more comfortable," Harry commented.

"Can I go first?" Lily asked her father.

Harry smiled, and ruffled her hair. "Go ahead, princess."

Lily smiled, glad that something seemed to be the same. She stood up and brought her bag over to the fireplace. She grabbed a bit of the powder, and moved into the fireplace. "The Burrow!" She threw the powder, and then she was spinning.

Once she reached her grandparents' fireplace, she stumbled out, almost tripping on her own feet as her head spun a little. But two hands caught her shoulders.

"Careful, little Lily." Lily looked to see that her uncle George had been the one to catch her.

Lily cleared her throat and straightened up. "Thank you," she muttered, her cheeks turning pink.

George laughed. "No problem. So, little Lily's a Slytherin? How's that going?"

Lily's cheeks didn't cool, but she felt her insides tense. "Yeah. It's going really well actually. I like it."

As expected, George laughed, but Lily waited for him to speak. "Well, I'm glad to hear that you like it. I'd be upset to hear that you were miserable."

Lily raised a brow. "You're not going to make a crack about me being a Slytherin?" From the stories she'd heard from her uncle himself, he hadn't been too fond of Slytherins during his school years.

George smiled. "No, because then I'd be making a crack about you." At Lily's surprised look, he laughed again. Then, like her father, he ruffled her hair. "We can't all be Gryffindors, little Lily." Then he moved to where her mother had come in through the fireplace, and gave her a hug.

Lily looked at her uncle's back, but then moved to put her bag in the corner. Some of the other kids must have already been there, for there were quite a few bags there already. She dropped her own bag, and then left to the kitchen. Her grandmother was the only one in there, which Lily was a little grateful for.

"Hello, Grandma," Lily greeted with a tentative smile.

Grandma Weasley turned and smiled widely at her youngest grandchild. Then she pulled her into a tight hug. "Oh, Lily! It's so good to have you back!" She let go of her tight grip, and air rushed into Lily's lungs. "How are you liking Hogwarts?"

Lily shrugged as her grandmother went back to the counter. "It's pretty fun actually. I've made a lot of friends."

"That's great! I also heard that you made the Quidditch team. Your father hasn't stopped talking about it since he heard. He's so proud," Molly mentioned.

Lily blushed, but couldn't help but smile. He was proud of her? "Yeah, I did. We won the game against Gryffindor last month," she told her.

"You're Seeker, aren't you? That's a great thing then," her grandmother congratulated. Lily almost laughed. She knew her grandmother wasn't a big Quidditch fan, and didn't know all that much, even though most of her kids had played the game.

"Where's Grandpa?" Lily asked.

"He's out in the shed," Molly said with a smile and a roll of her eyes. "He's out playing with his Muggle contraptions."

Lily smiled, and walked over to the back door. "Well, I think I'm going to go out and say hi."

"He'll be glad to see you, dear," Molly commented.

Lily smiled as she walked outside into the cold. She hurriedly trudged through the snow, and out to her grandfather's shed. Lily loved her grandfather, and they had a great relationship. Lily could always trust her grandfather with anything, which Lily truly loved.

She also loved to sit and play around with all his Muggle things with him.

Lily pushed open the shed's door, and saw that her grandfather was kneeling on the floor, fiddling with something that was under a blanket.

"Hey, Grandpa," Lily greeted.

Arthur turned his head, and a big smile spread across his face. "Lily! It's good to see you!" He stood up, wiping his hands on his pants, which were already stained. Even though his hands were still black, Lily hugged him tightly. Out of everyone, Lily had missed him the most.

"How are you, Grandpa?" Lily asked as she pulled out of the hug.

Arthur smiled at his granddaughter. "I'm doing good, Lily. Just fixing something." At those words, he was moving back toward the pile under the blanket.

"What is it?" Lily asked.

Arthur had a mischievous smile, and he picked up his wand. He gave it a flick, and the shed door closed, and Lily heard it lock. Then he grabbed the hem of the blanket, and with a flourish, he pulled the blanket off. Under it was something that Lily vaguely recognized as a Muggle vehicle . . . something called a bike?

"Is this a bike?" Lily asked.

Arthur smiled as he went back to his kneeling position. "It's called a motorcycle. It's like the adult version of a bike."

"Where did you get it?" Lily murmured. She walked toward it and ran her hand over part of the metal. The whole thing was a little dingy, but Lily couldn't help but appreciate it.

"It's your father's. It was given to him by his godfather, but it hasn't been working since before your father turned seventeen. I've been trying to fix it for years, but to no avail. So now, I'm going to try and fix it the Muggle way, and see if that makes a difference," Arthur explained.

Lily kneeled down next to him. "Can I help?" she asked.

Arthur smiled. "I'd take off the jacket, and I would remember that you're going to get dirty."

Lily shrugged and took off her jacket. "It's ok. What do I do?"

Arthur led her on what to do, giving careful and detailed instructions. Lily did as he said, and soon caught on herself, able to do a few things without being told how. They only spoke a little about things that weren't the bike, but through this, Arthur seemed to pick up on her reason for silence.

"So, how are you taking being a Slytherin?" he asked, finally talking about school.

Lily took in a quiet gulp as she handed him a Muggle tool. "I like it actually. It's great, and I'm glad that I was put there," she said firmly, not showing a bit of weakness.

Arthur gave a chuckle. "I'm glad to hear that. But then what's wrong?"

Lily tried to feign ignorance. "What do you mean?"

"Don't even try, Lily Luna," he chided. "I know something's wrong. What is it?"

Lily fidgeted. "Everything changed," she mumbled. "Well, it's not that everything changed, but that everyone changed. It was the first day, and suddenly was a dirty snake. Like every Slytherin is a death eater, or that their parents were. They think I've changed, but I don't really feel any different," she rambled.

Arthur hummed in thought. "Well, that is a problem. And I've heard stories about you, to be honest. About your fight with your brothers, with Hugo, and I've heard about how you knocked out Albus during your Quidditch match."

"I didn't start any of that!" Lily defended. "James and Albus were prejudice against my House before we even talked, and Hugo

agreed with them! And James and Albus were playing dirty before I did!"

Arthur held up a hand in defense. "I'm not blaming you. But I know at least what happened, if not the details behind them."

Lily let out a sigh, feeling a little bad for snapping so quickly. She seemed much more defensive lately. She picked up another tool, and started back on the bike. "James said that he didn't have a sister," she admitted quietly.

Out of the corner of her eye, she could see her grandpa looking at her. "He said that?" he asked.

Lily swallowed thickly. "Yeah. We'd had a fight on his birthday, and he said that he didn't have a sister. We haven't said each other's names since. And Albus seems to agree with them." Lily paused, hating how her eyes were starting to burn a little, as if she were about to cry. "I know I was mad at him. Really mad, but . . . I wouldn't have ever thought about denying that James was my brother. I didn't think it'd crossed his either, but . . . I guess I was wrong," she murmured.

This time, he gave a large sigh. "You know, Lily, years ago, your mother and uncles went through something like that. Percy started denying being a Weasley, and the rest denied that he was their brother. They were so angry. And do you know why?"

Lily stopped what she was doing and looked at him. He looked at her too. Lily shook her head. She hadn't heard this story. "No. Why?"

"Because they felt betrayed. At that time, the ministry was almost like an enemy to us, and he was siding with it. They felt like he was betraying them. He didn't come home for Christmas, and when I had my accident, he didn't come then. We didn't even really exchange words at work. I know how you feel about this," he empathized.

Lily felt that burn around her eyes go up a bit. "What did you do?" she asked.

He sighed again. "Sadly, there wasn't anything I could do. He was so set in his ways. And I'm not sure that there's anything you can do.

Every one of you kids are stubborn. And I'm not condoning how James feels, but to him, Slytherins are the enemy, and not only has his baby sister joined them, but she also is siding with them. How else could he feel?"

"I just don't get it!" Lily exclaimed intensely. "I mean, I didn't choose to be a Slytherin, but that's what I am! And I've been around the Slytherins, and I haven't found a reason to hate them all! James just doesn't like them because of the past!"

Arthur shrugged as he wiped off his hands and picked up a different gadget. "That may be true. James is very loyal, so loyal that he'll hold a grudge for something that happened before he was even thought of. But look at it this way. If James became best friends with someone that you hated, someone that you know he hated, how would you feel?"

Lily didn't answer that. She wanted to say that she'd accept it, and after everything that had happened, maybe she would have. But if she hadn't been outcast by them all, if she hadn't been rejected, would she have been able to feel betrayed about it? Would she be able to hate her own brother for something like that?

When Lily and her grandpa left the shed, she would agree that she was filthy. Her hands were almost completely black, and her jeans and shirt were beyond stained. And once she entered the kitchen, Lily concluded the rest of the family had arrived, because every one of her aunts and uncles were sitting around the kitchen. She started to wonder how long they'd been out there.

"What is on your hands?" Hermione asked once she saw her niece.

Lily gave a sheepish grin. "I was helping Grandpa."

"And she did wonderfully," Arthur complimented.

Molly rolled her eyes. "Well go on and wash your hands then. And change your clothes as well," she commanded.

Lily bit back a laugh. "Ok. I'll do that." She left the kitchen, and entered the living room. The only person that was in there was Molly, and she was reading. Lily didn't want to disturb her, so she didn't speak. She almost grabbed her bag, but then saw her hands again

and decided that picking up her bag would not be a good idea. So she moved toward the stairs, and ascended to the next floor. She could hear a lot of voices as she passed her uncle George's old room, and assumed that the rest of the kids were in there. Lily moved past it, and went into the bathroom.

Lily washed her hands thoroughly, getting all of the black off of them. She dried her hands, and left the bathroom, planning to get some clothes out of her bag to change into. But before she could make it to the stairs, someone was pulling her into another room. Lily turned around quickly to see Rose closing the door.

"What are you doing?" Lily demanded, her heart pounding with shock.

Rose gave a sheepish grin. "I wanted to talk to you, and this way, you can't run."

Lily sighed as her heart calmed. She was glad to see that there was no anger or hostility in Rose's eyes. That was a good thing. Right?

"What did you want then?" Lily asked calmly. She didn't want Rose to hear that she was worried. The whole thought of this upcoming conversation worried her.

Rose gave a sigh of her own. "Well, I just wanted to talk to you. I never get to at school. It's like you're avoiding me."

Lily shrugged, deciding not to lie. "I was. You hang out with Albus all the time. And I get it, he's your best friend, but I don't want to speak to Albus."

Rose gave her a sympathetic look. A look that Lily didn't want to see. "They're just upset, Lily. They'll get over it."

Lily snorted. "I doubt that. I can't imagine the boys apologizing and admitting they were wrong."

Rose rolled her eyes. "It's something all three of you need to do."

Lily shrugged again. "Maybe, but they deserve to have to do it first. They started it."

"Probably, but why can't you be the bigger person and let it go?" Rose questioned.

"I do. I only get into fights with them when they start with me," Lily defended.

"Look, I know that James and Albus have problems with the Slytherin House," Rose stated.

"They hate it," Lily interrupted.

"But," Rose continued, "that doesn't mean you have to ignore all of us."

"I've never gotten on with Molly and Dominique anyway," Lily said, avoiding what Rose was getting at.

"But you did with me, and Roxy, and Lucy, and Louis. Why has that changed?" Rose murmured.

Lily shrugged. "I have classes, and I have new friends. You guys always hang out with each other, and I can't be anywhere near Albus, James, or Hugo without fighting. They won't let it happen."

"Lily, we're family. You're going to throw it away just because you can't ignore your brothers' comments? You're just going to abandon us for your new friends that you've known for a few months?" Rose said incredulously.

Lily looked at the floor. "They accept that I'm a Slytherin."

"So do I! So do Louis, and Roxy and Lucy! We grew up together, and you'll abandon us for them?" Rose demanded.

"You want me to just abandon them?" Lily retorted. "I hang out with them. I like to hang out with them. They're my best friends! And funny enough," Lily said with spite, "you haven't even considered that I bring them around you guys with me!"

"You know the problems that would cause," Rose argued.

"Do you know the problems that bringing me there would cause?" Lily demanded. "Let's face it, Rose, things are different now!"

"Apparently," Rose murmured. "Lily, you were like my own sister."

Lily felt a pang of guilt, but she didn't let it show. Instead she gave a sneer. "We were never really sisters anyway."

Lily watched at a bit of that hostility entered Rose's eyes. "I guess so."

Lily brushed past her, not wanting to see anymore of that hostility. She hurried down the stairs, wanting to change her clothes. Wanting to change everything.

A dinner at The Burrow on Christmas Eve was never quiet, and even with all the tension between the cousin, it still wasn't quiet. Lily was just excluded from the conversations between the kids. Until Louis took a seat next to her.

"How have you been, Lil?" he asked, taking a bite of potatoes.

Lily took a drink from her glass before answering. "I've been better. You?"

"Not bad actually. I didn't get to tell you that you did a nice job during that Quidditch match," he mentioned.

Lily smiled. "Thanks. I actually hadn't expected to win."

"Confidence is the key," Louis retorted. "So, you're friends with Lola Pritchard and Jake Pucey?" he asked.

Lily chuckled, but hesitating. She wasn't sure what Louis thought about them. "It's Jace, and yeah, I hang with them a lot. They're my best friends."

Louis only gave a nod. "Glad to hear that. I haven't seen much of you, and I was a little worried at first that you were hiding out somewhere," he said with a laugh. Lily joined him.

Lily continued to talk with only Louis for the rest of the night. He tried to teach her how to play chess, although she was still miserable at it, so they switched to Exploding Snap. When the night started to come to a close, Lily and Louis stayed out of the game for the couch and

armchair. They didn't really care who slept where. But they did watch the game the others played, laughing to themselves when James beat Molly, and Molly threw a fit about cheating. It was even better when Lucy had won the couch, making James sleep on the armchair.

Lily and Louis chose spots on the floor next to each other, both still whispering quietly to each other. Lily was feeling her spirits lift immensely. She did have a friend among her cousins, one that didn't judge anything about her or what she did.

Chapter Six: The Quidditch Cup Tension

Lily sighed as she sat in a compartment with Lola and Jace. They were all on their way back to Hogwarts. The rest of Christmas Break had been relatively quiet for Lily. No fights had been started, and Lily mostly just hung around Louis during Christmas. Lily had gone back to her grandparents' house more often so that she could help her grandpa fix the bike. It was turning out to be a lot of fun, even if they hardly knew what they were doing.

But Lily was happy to be back on the train, and was very happy to see both of her friends again. She'd sent them both a gift, sending Lola a set of potions for her hair, since she always complained about it in the morning, and then she sent Jace a big box of Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes products. The gifts she got back were fantastic. Lola had sent her a green journal, which Lily had taken to using several times a week. And Jace had sent her a new portable wireless, and Lily had taken to listening to it every chance she got. They had it playing in their compartment as soon as the train had left.

But Lily's favorite gift she'd gotten from a friend was what she was wearing now. It was a headband with a lily attached to the side. The lily was a pale white, and the headband color changed every few minutes. But that wasn't all. With the headband, she'd also gotten a little stuffed, silver snake. Lily loved them, and had sent Scorpius Malfoy something great in return. She'd sent him a very elegant, forest green silk jacket. And as a bonus, she had gone to Madam Malkin's, and had her stitch a silver snake on the back.

"I'm not sure if I wanna go back to school," Jace mumbled. "You know they're just going to pack homework onto us before the exams."

"I doubt it will be that hard," Lola said with a roll of her eyes.

"For smart people," Jace countered. "But I'm practically failing half of my classes."

"Don't worry, Jace," Lily assured, "we'll make sure you get through it."

"Speak for yourself," Lola muttered, flipping to the next page of her magazine.

Lily bit back a laugh at the glare Jace sent toward Lola. But an argument was saved as Christian walked into the compartment.

"Hello, you three. How were your Christmases?" he asked, taking a seat next to Jace.

"Boring," Jace replied.

"Normal," Lola mumbled.

"Awkward," Lily answered. Then they all laughed. "How about you, Christian?"

Christian shrugged. "Not too bad. My little brother followed me around, I got a lot of presents, and I was forced to go to a bunch of adult parties so that I could hang out with a bunch of younger kids."

Jace whistled. "Sucks to be you."

"How'd it turn out with your family, Lil?" Christian asked.

Lily hummed a moment before explaining. "Well, my brothers and Hugo still hate me, Rose doesn't want to see me anymore, the others ignored me, and the only person on my side is Louis. So . . . better than expected I guess," she laughed.

"Sounds like it went well enough," Christian joked.

The compartment door slid open again, and two older Gryffindor boys walked in. "Well, Todd, it looks like we did find a compartment," one of the boys commented.

"Yeah, we just gotta clean the trash out of it," the other replied with a grin. Both boys laughed.

All four Slytherins glared at the Gryffindors. Lola closed her magazine, sitting up, Jace straightened up, and Lily stood from her seat. Her glare was the meanest. "Get out," she hissed.

Both boys grinned wider, looking as if they would soon begin to laugh. The one who had spoken first stepped closer, a swagger in

his stance. "And are four little first years gunna make us?" he taunted.

Even though she was still glaring, Lily grinned. She'd been raised around older boys, and knew how to handle them in a fight, whether it was verbal or physical. She stepped closer too, her head just reaching his chest. To other girls, he would have been intimidating, but to Lily, he was just another arrogant jerk.

"Do I have to?" she asked, keeping her tone calm.

She could see a bit of surprise in the boy's eyes, but he was still more cocky than anything. "You really think that you can?" he laughed.

Lily thought back to the one piece of advice her Aunt Audrey had given her when fighting boys, and had decided to take it. With quick precision, Lily slammed her knee up, smashing into the older boy's groin. Said boy let out a high-pitched moan, his hands moving to protect himself as he fell to his knees.

"You crazy bitch!" the other boy exclaimed angrily. He began to pull out his wand.

"What are you all doing in here?" a voice from behind the other boy demanded. They all turned to see Ginger Pritchard standing at the door to the compartment.

"Sis," Lola sighed in relief.

Ginger was glaring at the two Gryffindor boys. "I said, what is going on?" she demanded again.

The boy still standing sneered as he nodded toward Lily. "She kneed him in the dick," he growled, not bothering to be modest.

Ginger's face was twisted in disgust as she looked at the boy kneeling on the floor. Then she looked at Lily. "Good job." She looked back at the boy. "Well, I'll tell you what I saw. I saw two older boys coming in here, thinking that they could kick out four kids that were already in there. So how about I give you both detentions for the next week?"

"That's bull!" the boy argued.

"Well, Kirke, when I care, I'll let you know," Ginger retorted. "Now both of you have ten seconds to get about before it's two weeks."

The Kirke boy lifted his friend, and with harsh glares, the boys left the compartment, the other boy groaning painfully. Ginger watched after them.

"Thanks, sis," Lola thanked.

Ginger looked back at her sister. In no way did they look like sisters. Ginger was tall for a girl, and her hair was a coppery color. Her narrow eyes were a forest green, and her skin wasn't as pale as Lola's, but instead was quite a bit tan.

Ginger shrugged. "It was no problem. Kirke and Sloper are known to be asses toward younger Slytherins. It's really unattractive, I've been wanting to knee Sloper for a while now, so I'm glad that someone did."

Lily moved to sit back down. "I wasn't going to let two dumb Gryffindors try to intimidate me," she replied.

Ginger smirked. "Glad to hear it, Lily Luna." Lily rolled her eyes at the nickname. She's pretty much forgotten about it over the holidays. "You kiddies behave now," Ginger teased. She closed the compartment door, and they could hear her heels click as she walked away.

"Thank Merlin your sister came," Christian said to Lola. "That could have been very ugly."

"Just like you, huh, Lola?" Jace teased.

Lola kicked his knee, making him nurse it for the rest of the train ride to school.

Within the next few days the news about Lily kneeing Harper Sloper in the groin had spread through the whole student body. The Slytherins were the only ones that seemed to tell the real stories, while kids from the other Houses had twisted the story, talking of how she had brutally attacked him, or how she had knocked him out.

Now some kids seemed a bit terrified around her, but Lily ignored them. What Lily didn't ignore though were the praises that she was constantly getting from other Slytherins, especially the older ones. She'd even been invited to an older Slytherins' party.

"You should go!" Lola had insisted. "No one but fifth years and up are allowed to go, with the occasional fourth year! A first year has never gone!"

Lily rolled her eyes. "There's no point in going. I'm just going to end up hanging around a bunch of older kids, who are intent on getting smashed, and then I'll get to watch one or perhaps two of them throw up their vital organs because they can't handle firewhiskey. It's pointless. I'd rather spend time with people I actually like," she remarked.

Jace laughed and threw his arm around her shoulders. "And we love you for that fact."

But on the night of the Slytherin party, Lily didn't go straight to sleep. Instead, she journeyed to the kitchens, and got a few snacks to eat. Then she sat in front of the fireplace alone in the common room. She had brought down a book as well. It was one that Lily had recently grown to appreciate. It was all about a pureblood wizard falling in love with a Muggle girl. And how because of that one thing, his entire family turned against him and hated him. Lily could empathize with that part.

"Out for a bit of midnight reading?" Lily jumped, startled. She turned around to see Scorpius Malfoy descending the stairs. "Can't sleep?" he asked.

Lily grinned, marking her place in the book as she closed it. "No, I just didn't want to. I'm not really tired. You?"

Scorpius came around to sit next to her. "Same I guess. I just didn't feel like going to sleep." They were silent for a moment, but then Scorpius looked at her. "So, I never got to ask, how was your Christmas?"

Lily shrugged. "I guess it wasn't terrible. I talked with Louis, hung out with my grandpa, and did my best to avoid the rest of my cousins,

since they pretty much all hate me." Lily smiled wryly at him. "And yours?"

Scorpius grinned. "Well, it was ok, at least when other were there. Otherwise, I mainly just fought with my grandfather."

Lily raised a brow. "Really? Why?"

"We always fight," he replied. "He thinks that I don't represent the Malfoy name well, because I don't spout out pureblood supremacy, and he thinks that I don't respect him. But I'll honestly tell him that I don't respect him."

Lily chuckled. "You don't like him?"

"No. I can't stand him. And now he hates that I've accepted a Potter into Slytherin," Scorpius teased.

"He doesn't like me?" Lily asked with a grin.

"Nope, so I wore the jacket you gave me for the rest of the break," Scorpius laughed. Lily laughed with him.

"So you'll do anything to annoy him?" Lily questioned.

He nodded. "Yup. You wanna help?" he asked.

Lily smiled. "What would I have to do?"

Scorpius shrugged. "You wanna come over during summer break?" he asked.

Lily's smile grew. "Sure. Why not."

Scorpius smirked. "Great." He looked at her face, and then glanced up. "So you like the gift I sent?" he asked.

My hand involuntarily, and I touched the lily on her headband. Then she looked back at him. "I love it. It was my favorite gift this year."

"I'm glad, because I had a hard time picking something out, so I decided to make something," he mentioned.

Lily's eyes widened. "You made this?"

He chuckled. "Well, I bought the headband and the lily. I had my mum help me attach the lily to the headband, and my dad suggested a spell that would make it change colors. So I guess my parents made it really. But it was my idea if that helps."

Lily leaned forward and hugged him, her cheeks turning pink. She felt Scorpius tense a bit, but then he relaxed and hugged her back. Lily pulled back and smiled at him. "Thank you. It's the best gift I've ever gotten."

Scorpius actually smiled this time, his own cheeks turning pink as well. He ruffled her hair a little. "No problem, Lily. You deserve nothing less than something great," he murmured.

Days kept passing, and Lily was soon growing accustom to ignoring her family around the halls, Louis being the exception. When the game against Ravenclaw came around, Slytherin crushed them, 510-180. The more times Lily caught the Snitch, the more popular she became among the Slytherins, and the more hated she became to kids from other Houses.

When the time for Easter Break came around, Lily stayed at school. And once she heard that most of her family was going home, she was relieved that she wouldn't have to work to avoid people. All of her friends stayed too, so they were practically free from fights. But since the exams were approaching, teachers had packed homework on their students, and half of the break was spent doing their work. And for Lily, a fourth of her time was put into Quidditch practice. Aaron had demanded that all the players stay at school, and they practiced almost every day of the break. Every night, Lily went to bed exhausted.

When the break ended, Aaron stepped the practices up. They had them even more often, and they lasted two hours longer. Their last game against Hufflepuff was coming close, and Aaron wanted a big lead against them. Gryffindor and Slytherin were top candidates for the cup, but Aaron had confidence, because Gryffindor killed Hufflepuff, and Slytherin had beaten Gryffindor earlier that year. But the problem was that Gryffindor still had one match left against Ravenclaw, and even Aaron couldn't believe that Gryffindor would lose the game. But what matter was how much they won by.

When the whole team sat, dressed and ready, in the locker room before the game, Aaron paced around them.

"What's the game plan, Captain?" Raven Bole asked.

Aaron sighed. "Ok. I want us to play like never before. Once we'd knocked out Potter in our first match, we got cocky. With Ravenclaw, we were lazy. For this game, I want us to be intense every second of the match. And, Potter," he addressed, "I don't want you to catch the Snitch until we have at least 500 hundred points. Until then, just keep the other Seeker from catching the Snitch. I don't care if you have to play dirty to do it."

Lily nodded. "You got it."

"Bole, Goyle," both boys looked at Aaron, "ever so often, try and take out their Keeper and Seeker. Bole, you go for the Keeper. Your aim is better, and I want the Keeper out more. Goyle, you take the Seeker. Now, don't make that your main priority, but ever now and then, take a shot at them. Got it."

"No problem."

"You got it, bro."

"Good. Now, Chasers, I want an impressive amount of teamwork. And, Montague, as Keeper, I want you at the top of your game. I want you to be so good that they get no more than ten goals past you," Aaron stated. "Am I clear?"

"Totally."

"Let's do this!"

"We'll crush them!"

"Hufflepuff's no match for us!"

Aaron smiled at the enthusiasm. "Then let's get out there!"

They all got up, shuffling into a line. Aaron led them out onto the field. They ignored the boos from other teams, keeping their

composure. Lily scanned the Hufflepuff Seeker. She was tiny and thin, the usual Seeker build. She looked like maybe a second year. Lily worried a bit, wondering how fast she was.

But once Lily was in the air and playing the game, she didn't focus on how big he was, just on how good his vision was. She kept her eyes on him, yet also searched the area around him for the Snitch. She wasn't going to get caught in the same trick she'd played on Albus.

"Bole takes a shot at the Hufflepuff Keeper, Paxton Smith . . . and he dodges the Bludger, but can't make the save against Goyle's shot. The score is now ten to zero, with Slytherin in the lead," Meredith announced. "Paxton throws the Quaffle to Grace Macmillan, who swerves past Adrian Flint and makes her way down the field. But she's intercepted by Aaron Goyle, who quickly loses the Quaffle to Natalya Whitby. Whitby zooms down the field with Scorpius Malfoy on her tail."

Lily did her best to listen as she watched out for the Snitch and the other Seeker. She groaned when she heard Whitby score a goal. The game kept going, and luckily, Slytherin starting pulling farther and farther away with the lead. Lily had seen the Snitch a couple of times, and had led the other Seeker away from it. She'd dodged a few Bludgers that Lars had hit when she was too close to the Hufflepuff Seeker. Bole and Lars were very intent on their given goals, along with knocking the Chasers. Already, Bole had knocked one of the Hufflepuff Chasers, Gary Fleet, off of his broom, and he was carried off of the field. But then the moment Aaron had wanted came.

"And Malfoy has the Quaffle, and he passes it to Flint, and Flint passes it to Goyle. Goyle throws it back to Flint, and Flint tosses it to Malfoy, who kicks it at the goal. Paxton is there all ready to catch it . . . but a Bludger knocks him off the broom and toward the ground, and Malfoy makes the shot! Two hundred and thirty to eighty, Slytherin in the lead!" Meredith called.

Lily stopped flying to watch as Paxton Smith crashed to the ground, out cold. She cheered with the rest of the team as he was carried away.

"The game looks bleak for Hufflepuff. But wait! Has Rickett seen the Snitch?" Meredith almost screamed.

Lily flipped around to look at tiny Kimberly Rickett, and saw that she was swiftly moving toward a glint of gold. Lily flew after her, thankful that her broom was one of the fastest models. But no matter what, she could only catch up to the tail of Rickett's broom. Then Lily heard the wind whistling even louder. Then something hit her shoulder.

Lily hissed angrily as the Bludger connected with her shoulder, muttering curses. But the Bludger continued on its path, and knocked into the back of to Rickett's head. She went limp, and slowly, Lily watched her start to fall. Going on instinct, Lily sped up close to Rickett's slowing broom, and caught her Quidditch robe's sleeve, and held on tight, pulling her back up. Slowly, Lily led her back down to the ground, where Professors Macmillan and Bell were rushing over to help. When Lily got off of her broom, she kept Rickett propped up.

"Is she ok?" Professor Macmillan asked.

"Just knocked out," Lily replied. Professor Bell conjured up a stretcher, and Professor Macmillan and Lily loaded her onto it.

"Thank you, Miss Potter," Professor Bell said.

Lily ignored her blush. "It's no problem. Something any decent person would do." Without another comment, Lily remounted her broom and took off back into the air. She got back into the game, listening for a score.

"Malfoy's got the Quaffle, he passes it to Flint, but it's intercepted by Whitby. She's flanked by Flint and Goyle, Goyle knocks it out of her hand, and throws it back to Malfoy, who takes the shot and makes it," Meredith commented. "The score is now 340 to 80, Slytherin dominating the game."

The game kept going, and Hufflepuff was in bad shape. They had lost their Keeper, Seeker, and one of their Chasers. Lily circled above the game, watching every goal Slytherin scored as Hufflepuff to just get the ball in their possession. When they got 500, Lily decided to wait until they had a perfect 500 ahead of the Hufflepuff

team. Once they hit 580, Lily started to search. She saw the small glint of gold down below, and Lily dove down after it. The Snitch continued down, not going up or turning, but just straight down. When Lily got close to a foot above the ground, the Snitch kept close to the ground, as if it was trying to hide in the grass. Lily reached her hand out for it, her knuckles scraping across the ground. She felt the Snitch in her hand, and her foot caught the ground, and she spun off the broom.

Lily crashed to the ground, a deja-vu of catching the firework earlier in the year. She kept her fist clenched, keeping a hold of the Snitch. The pain she felt was pretty dull, a lot less than the last time she crashed. As she lay on her back, she held her fist up for everyone to see.

"Potter has the Snitch! Slytherin beats Hufflepuff, 760 to 80!" Meredith groaned.

As Lily got up, the rest of the team started to descend and land around her. Scorpius helped her stand back up, and Aaron was congratulating the two Beaters. Then he turned to the rest of them.

"You guys did awesome. Exactly what I said." Aaron grinned. "I think we've got the Quidditch Cup in the bag."

The next day, Aaron had posted a score sheet on the bulletin board in the Slytherin common room. So far Slytherin had a major lead after their big win against Hufflepuff. They were beating second place by 1030 points. They were beating Gryffindor by 1150. No one could see Gryffindor getting that many points in one game. And to be sure, Aaron had demanded that every Slytherin player attend the game next week.

For that entire week, it was extremely tense. The violence between some Houses, Slytherin and Gryffindor, increased by the second. Lily and Hugo exploded at each other at least once a day. There was news of a fight between the Houses every day. And for the first, Slytherin had Ravenclaw on its side.

The day before the match, both Lily and Scorpius had walked into dinner late after a detention. They sat down by the others, who had waited for them, and started to eat.

"Gryffindor?" Lana asked.

"They're poor losers. They know they can't win," Scorpius muttered.

"It was a poor argument, so they turned it into a fight," Lily explained.

Scorpius started to laugh. "They even tried to attack how Lily helped Rickett down to the ground after she got knocked out!"

Lola looked astonished. "How could they attack that? That was really honorable!"

Lily rolled her eyes. "They thought I was being a suck up. And how I didn't talk to Rickett after the game supposedly proved it." She gave an unladylike snort. "As if that was why. I didn't talk to her because I don't know her. What the heck would I even say?"

"She should have thanked you though," Jace remarked.

Lily shrugged. "That's her business. I really don't care."

"It makes you feel uncomfortable, doesn't it?" Scorpius teased.

Lily glared at him, her cheeks turning pink. "Shut up, Scorpius," she hissed.

Scorpius only smiled and laughed.

When the day of the last match of the season came around, the tension was at an all time high. Lily walked to the game with the team, which was joined by Lana, Lola, and Jace. When they got to the stands, Gryffindor seemed to be doing everything they could to encourage their team. They had signs and banners for each player. Scorpius had scoffed and rolled his eyes at the signs, calling them unneeded.

When the game actually started, Lily forgot all about the rivalry. Instead, she was focused on actually watching her family and their friends play. The only time she'd ever watched them, and not played herself, was when she was younger, and they all said she was too little. She'd forgotten how amazing they were. Like Rose, who wasn't a big fan, was barely intercepted by the other players. Or how Lucy, so thin and tiny, could play as an excellent Keeper, and could bat

away a Quaffle in the blink of an eye. Suddenly, Lily felt a pang of longing and envy. For the first time since she was a little girl, Lily wanted to play with her family again. She wanted to play alongside her brothers and cousins. She wanted to have that family teamwork. But inside she knew that she would never have that again.

"That was a foul!" Scorpius groaned. "Both Weasley and Potter were near the goals! That's Stooging! You can't do that!"

"Calm down, the Keeper blocked the shot," Raven Bole replied.

Hours later, the game was still going, and neither team had more than three hundred points. Both teams had practiced their defenses very well.

"They need to just give up," Lars commented with a yawn.

"Well, Davies is looking a little more alert, so I think he's given it up," Adrian commented.

Lily looked up at the Seekers, and Davies was looking for the Snitch a little harder than he had been. And Albus was keeping his eye on him.

"I'm not surprised. They can't catch us, and they are in the lead," Lana remarked.

"Wait! Looks like Potter gave up too!" Jace exclaimed, pointing toward the sky. Albus was zooming through the air, and Lily caught sight of the gold glint he was after. Within seconds, he caught it, signaling the end of the game, Gryffindor winning.

"Gryffindor wins!" Meredith cheers. "The score ends with four hundred and seventy points for Gryffindor, and three hundred and fifty points for Ravenclaw!"

It was the Slytherins that cheered the loudest. The headmaster came over the megaphone. "Well, I know that the Slytherin team is here, so will the team come down to the field please?" Professor Brown asked.

The rowdy team made their way down to the pitch, celebrating the entire way. Once they were on the field, Professor Brown was on the

pitch, the cup in his hands. Professor Slughorn was standing next to him, beaming proudly. The team lined up in front of him.

"I proudly pronounce Slytherin the winners of the Quidditch Cup," Professor Brown announced loudly.

He handed the cup to Aaron, who held it proudly above his head. Then with a grin, he passed it down the line of the team. Lily was the last one to have it in her hands, and Aaron boosted her up onto his shoulders. Lily held the cup up high. And suddenly, she remembered the story her dad had told the three kids about when he first won the Quidditch Cup at school, and of how great it felt.

She finally understood that feeling.

Chapter Seven: The End of the Beginning

Lily never had troubles with classes or homework, in fact it was quite easy for her. But she hadn't expected the workload they'd get two weeks before exams. In her eyes, the only class that was taking it easy was Charms. There were barely any essays, but mainly just practice on the spells they'd learned. It soon became almost every first year's favorite class.

"I hate school!" Jace groaned into his open Potions book. "This sucks! This sucks!" he hissed.

"Don't be a baby, big ears," Lola snapped with a roll of her eyes. Although she would never admit it, the pressure of all the homework had started to stress her out as well.

"We're first years!" Jace moaned. "We shouldn't have this much homework!"

"Well we do, so suck it up!" Lola retorted.

"Ok, children," Lily intervened. "Let's just finish these essays." Lily looked over Jace's work. "The potion turns green after adding the nettles," she instructed.

Jace looked at what he'd written. His head fell to the table in defeat. "I give up," he muttered.

Lily laughed. "Just fix that, and then finish the essay. I'll help you go over it to make sure it's right."

"You're a lifesaver, Lil," he said in relief.

Lily grinned. "It's in the blood."

When the day for exams came, you went in the order of your class schedule for the day. That meant that Slytherin and Gryffindor had their Potions exam first. Professor Slughorn had them make a Forgetfulness Potion. Lily found it to be very easy, and each step was easy to follow. Toward the end, she found that she still had time, so she let it simmer a little longer to produce a better effect when someone would drink it. This was something that Professor Slughorn had bragged about.

"Miss Potter here has made the best I've seen in years. She even remembered that if you let it heat a little longer, the color will change, showing that the effect is more potent. Well done, Miss Potter. Twenty-five points to Slytherin!" Slughorn cheered.

Lily grinned smugly over at Hugo, whose potion had turned into a sickly yellow. When they all left the classroom, Jace hugged Lily tightly.

"Thank you! Thank you for going over potions with me yesterday!" he thanked.

Lily laughed as he pulled away. "How'd you do?"

He grinned. "Not perfect, but much better than I would have. Mine actually turned close to the right color!" he exclaimed. Then he looked over at Lola. "Hey, dirty, how'd you do?"

Lola grinned smugly at him. "Mine turned exactly the right color. Not a shade different."

Jace rolled his eyes. "And she'll probably never let me forget," he muttered to Lily.

Herbology was next, and the first years had to write a very detailed paper on what Devil's Snare was and what it could do, and then how to pot it correctly. For bonus points, Professor Longbottom said that if you could recite the poem that explained how to kill the plant, and then explain what the poem said, he'd add up to five points to your total score.

Transfiguration followed, and Lily found this one to be the toughest so far. You had to turn a hamster into a deck of cards, and then turn it back. Points got taken off if there were any hamster-like qualities left on the deck, and points were added if every card was there. Lily held her breath as Professor Bell counted the cards. She let out a relieved sigh when Professor Bell reached fifty-two. Then Lily countered her curse, and turned the cards back into a hamster. Professor Bell smiled, congratulating her, and then let her leave. Lily was thankful that the professor didn't seem to notice the small red heart on the hamster's belly.

"That sucked!" Jace complained as they sat at lunch. "Professor Bell must hate us! My cards had feet and started running across the table."

Lily and Lola hid their laughs behind their hands. Christian patted Jace's shoulder. "Don't worry, dude, mine blew up when I tried to change it back."

Lily and Lola couldn't hide it anymore.

After lunch they had History of Magic, which was what everyone was dreading. For an hour, they all had to sit in silence and answer a thousand questions on things that no one found necessary. Things like the Self-Stirring Cauldron, Magic Carpets, and who made the first broom. Lily rushed through it, and then when she found she had too much time to just sit there, she started going over her answers, but found no mistake to fix. So she started to make her quill float around the paper. Then for fun, she tried to make the ink in her bottle float. She got it to float, but for only a few seconds before it sloshed back into the bottle.

"I hate history!" Lola seethed. They were leaving the classroom, and making their way through the crowd.

"What happened?" Lily asked. Lola had never complained about it before.

"I had a complete blank!" she groaned. "Like all of that studying flew away!"

Jace laughed. "Don't worry. I didn't do much better. I left a lot of them blank."

Lily rolled her eyes at Jace. "I'll be surprised if you pass to second year."

Jace laughed. "Second time's the charm."

Lola scoffed. "That's third time, moron."

Next was Charms, and as the past weeks had shown, the exam was easy. All you had to do was make a vase float around the room. Lily

ended up having fun with it, making a book float as well, and making a quill write on a piece of parchment. Professor Flitwick had laughed with her, and exclaimed about how she was going to be an excellent Charms student for her whole school career.

Defense Against the Dark Arts was their last exam before dinner. Lily found this one to be fun too. Professor Creevey had things float around you, and you had to repel them with a Knockback Jinx. All that was left was Astronomy, and then they would be done.

When the exams were done, and they all went to dinner, Jace practically danced as they walked.

"I can't believe that it's almost finally over!" he cheered. "All is right in the world!"

"You are such a drama queen," Lola mocked.

Jace ignored her. It seemed nothing could put a damper on his mood. "I can finally eat and not feel like I'm swallowing rocks or something!"

The three sat down at the Slytherin table, and immediately started to eat, relieved that the stress of the exams was lifted. Everyone was more relaxed, except for the fifth and seventh years who still had another day of exams.

"I am not looking forward to that," Jace muttered.

Later that night before bed, the first years took their Astronomy exam. Lily found this one boring. All they did was name constellations and moons. It was a dull hour. But no matter how dull it was, every first year had a good sleep that night.

The time leading up to getting back their results was met with a quiet week. There were no fights, not even between Gryffindor and Slytherin. A few times Lily had taken the time to hang out with Louis. She usually brought Lola and Jace with her, and Louis never seemed to mind. In fact, he got along great with them, and he would sometimes bring his friend Paul Bradley.

When Lily got her exams back, she was very surprised. She got a perfect score on everything. She got a hundred and thirteen percent

on Herbology, and a hundred and five percent on Charms. She even had a hundred and two percent on Transfiguration. Lily stared at the paper in shock as they sat in the common room.

"Well, at least I'm going to my second year," Jace sighed, dropping his scores on the table in front of them. "My highest was a ninety-eight. And that was in Charms. I got a seventy-two in History of Magic. I'm surprised I passed it."

"At least I beat your score in History of Magic," Lola teased.

"What did you get?" Lily asked.

"Seventy-three," Lola said with a laugh. "I did really good otherwise. I got a one hundred in Potions."

"How about you, Lil?" Jace asked, laying back on the chair, his legs stretching over his chair's arm.

Lily looked back at her scores. Then she shrugged. "I did pretty good I guess," she said, waving the scores off. "I'm going to join you for second year," she teased.

Jace laughed. "Welcome to the pack!"

On the last day of school, Lily found herself packing the rest of her things. She'd procrastinated doing it for the last week. She put her books in, then all her other little knickknacks and such. She filed her score sheet into her Potions book. She knew her parents would want to see it. They'd always had the boys keep theirs so they could see them. Inside, Lily felt a little smug at the thought. Her brothers had never received the scores that she had.

But then her insides dropped. She was going home, to brothers and cousins that couldn't stand her. At Hogwarts it was easy to avoid them, but at home . . . it would be impossible. And this wasn't going to be like Christmas break. She would be stuck with them for months, and to add even more onto it, her uncle Ron and aunt Hermione visited often, bringing Rose and Hugo with them.

On the train the next day, Lily sat in a compartment with Lola, Jace, Lana, Scorpius, and Mitch Avery, another Slytherin in Scorpius's year.

"I can't believe the year's already over," Lola sighed, resting her head against the class of the window.

"It kinda sucks. It means that we're one year closer to O.W.L.s, and Rose Weasley loves to point that out," Mitch groaned.

Lily chuckled. "Just wait until you get to your fifth year. I doubt she'll ever shut up."

Scorpius laughed with her. "So, when can you come over, Lily Lu?"

Lily rolled her eyes at the name. "I don't know. Whenever I guess."

"She's going to your house?" Mitch asked.

"Trying to annoy your grandfather again?" Lana asked knowingly.

Scorpius grinned. "Hey, it would bug her brothers too. Kill two birds with one stone."

"What if your parents don't let you?" Jace teased.

Lily shrugged. "Then I'll just lie and say I'm going over to Teddy's or something. Anything to get out of the house."

"We should all get together sometime this summer," Lana suggested. "Like, we could meet up in Diagon Alley or something."

"How about next week on Tuesday?" Mitch suggested. "My parents are taking my siblings to see a crappy Quidditch game. They oddly want to see the Chudley Cannons lose another match. I'm skipping out."

"That sounds fine for me," Lana nodded. "Should I tell Lars?"

"Yeah, bring him too. He'll be pissy if he knows we didn't invite him," Scorpius laughed.

"I'll be there," Jace told them.

"My parents won't care," Lily said with a shrug.

"Lola?" Mitch asked.

Lola nodded. "Yeah, I'll be able to get out. I just hope my parents don't make me take one of my siblings." She looked disgusted at the thought.

"We can pawn them off at Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes, if you do," Mitch assured.

"Yeah, it's easy to spend hours in there," Jace agreed.

"I've spent more time there than you could imagine," Lily muttered.

For the rest of the train ride, the six stayed in the compartment, enjoying each other's company. Lily felt relaxed, until the time came to get off the train. She waited for the others, and Scorpius brought down her trunk. The six walked through the crowd together, searching for their families. Lily, Lana, and Scorpius were the last ones together. They decided to look for Lily's family, since Lana and Scorpius's parents would most likely be together. Lily grimaced when they did find them.

"Well, good luck, Lil," Lana said, hugging Lily tightly.

Lily sighed. "Thanks. I might need a lot of luck."

Scorpius laughed. "Well you've got mine." He wrapped her in a hug, and lifted her off her feet. Lily laughed, kicking at his legs. Scorpius put her down, still laughing. Lily looked at her family from the corner of her eye, and could see quite a few sour or unsure faces.

Lily smiled. "And I get the feeling that you just made the ride home much more relaxed," she mocked.

Scorpius laughed again. "No problem, Lily Luna. I'll beat 'em next time I see them," he joked.

Lily shook her head, and grabbed her trunk and Regal's cage again. "I'll see you two on Tuesday. And I'll find out when I can go to your house," Lily told them.

"Alright. Bye, Lil."

"Later, Lily Lu."

Lily turned around and walked back toward her family. Teddy came up and grabbed Regal's cage and her trunk. "I'll take this. You're riding with me and Victoire."

Lily felt elated at the news. "You two are coming over?"

Teddy nodded as they walked to the family. "Yep, us and Ron and Hermione. Plus Rose and Hugo."

Lily hid her distaste.

"Hello, sweetheart," Ginny said, hugging her daughter tightly.

Lily gave a small smile. "Hey, Mum. How was the rest of your time without us?"

"The house is painfully boring without three kids to tear it apart," Ginny said with a smile.

Harry stepped forward and hugged his daughter. "How are you, princess?"

"I'm doing pretty good," Lily answered.

The entire Weasley-Potter clan made their way off of the platform, and to the parking lot. Teddy packed Lily's things into his car's trunk, and Lily slid into the backseat with Regal. Victoire got into the front and turned around to smile at Lily. "How was your first year?"

Lily smiled. Victoire could never hate anyone, no matter what House they were in. Hate wasn't in her nature. "It was pretty good. It went kind of fast."

"They slow down as you get closer to O.W.L.s," Teddy teased as he got in.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Thanks, I'll try to remember that."

Unlike the car ride home for Christmas, this ride was full of jokes and laughter. Lily loved Teddy and Victoire. They were probably two of her most favorite people.

When they reached the Potter house, Teddy brought in Lily's things, and brought them to her room. He didn't hover, and left Lily so that she could unpack. Lily did so slowly, but knew that she would have to go down there sooner or later. After all, she had to give them her score sheet. But she took her time nonetheless. She took out her books and stacked them in a bookcase, she put away her clothes, and took out everything else and placed things around the room.

Once Lily felt she couldn't avoid it any longer, she pulled her scores out of her Potions book, and made her way downstairs. She could hear voices from the kitchen, but it wasn't just the adults. Lily mustered up her courage, and walked into the kitchen. She was right, and they were all in there, the adults and the kids.

"There you are, Lily," Ginny said with a smile.

Lily gave a grin. "Yeah, I knew you and Dad would want this." Lily handed her scores to her mother.

"Oh, your exam scores!" Ginny said. Harry moved to look over her shoulder.

"Wow, princess! These are excellent!" Harry congratulated with a smile. "I don't think Hermione even got scores like some of these."

"Let me see," Ron said, eager to see someone be smarter than his wife had been at eleven. Hermione rolled her eyes, but looked at the paper Ron held. "Wow," Ron mumbled, his eyes wide.

Hermione looked impressed as well. "You must have studied hard, Lily."

Lily shrugged. "I studied a little I guess. Really I just helped a friend of mine study."

Rose went over and looked at the paper, and her jaw dropped. "How is that possible?" she practically shrieked.

Ginny smiled at her daughter. "I think you deserve something special. How about you chose what we have for dinner? Your favorite?"

Lily's face brightened. "Yeah, that sounds perfect!"

Ginny laughed. "Then that's what we'll have."

Lily smiled as her mum started to get things out to make her favorite.

"Not even your brothers have done that. Good job, sweetheart. I'm proud of you," Harry complimented.

Lily smiled brighter. "Thanks. Actually, since you guys seem to think I should get something special, I have an idea."

Harry laughed. "Really? What do you want?"

"Well . . ." Lily trailed, "it's more like what I want to do."

"Well what do you want to do?" Ginny asked.

Lily took in a small breath. "I want to stay at a friend's house sometime this summer," she answered.

"What friend?" Harry asked.

Lily let out that breath. "Scorpius Malfoy."

A silence. And then . . .

"No way!" James exclaimed.

"James!" Harry warned. James glared, but kept quiet. "Why Scorpius's house?"

Lily didn't think she should tell them the real reason. That it was to bug his grandfather. That wasn't her fact to tell. So she shrugged. "He's a really good friend, and he invited me to come over."

"Is he the one that sent that headband?" Ron asked wearily, looking at Lily's hair.

Lily touched the headband. She hadn't told her family who sent it. "Oh, yeah. He said he made it. So can I?" she pleaded, looking directly at her dad. She gave her best innocent look.

Harry seemed unsure, but eventually softened. He never said no when Lily looked at him like that. "When should I take you?"

Lily squealed happily. "Well, I'm not sure, but I've already got an idea."

"Which is?" Ginny asked.

"Well, we've all agreed to meet in Diagon Alley next Tuesday, so I could just go home with him then," Lily suggested.

"What about your things?" Ginny asked.

Lily shrugged. "We could stop by a moment, and I could grab it. Please?"

Harry shrugged this time. "I don't see a problem with that. Who's all going to Diagon Alley?"

"Me, Lola, Jace Pucey, Scorpius, Mitch Avery, and Lana Goyle. Oh! And Lars Goyle," Lily listed. She noticed that her uncle Ron's brows furrowed with every name, and her cousins' faces each turned darker. Only Teddy, Victoire, and Hermione seemed relaxed.

But her own parents ignored it all. "Well we have no problem with you going to Scorpius's house," Ginny told her.

"Oh, Lil, I was going to ask you something," Teddy mentioned. "Would you like to stay at my flat a few days?"

Lily was starting to feel hopeful. Perhaps this summer wouldn't be terrible after all. "Sure! When?"

"I'm off of work the day after tomorrow for the next three days. I was thinking then. That ok?" he asked.

"Perfect!" Lily enthused. She looked at her parents. "I'm going to write Scorpius and tell him that I can come over. Ok?"

"I'll call you when dinner's ready," Ginny told her.

Lily practically skipped up to her room. She wrote a letter to Scorpius, her joy filtering through her writing. She tied the letter to

Regal's leg, and let him out the window. As she watched him fly off, she felt as if she would explode with excitement.

On her second day at Teddy and Victoire's flat, Lily finally got a response from Scorpius. His letter made her laugh.

Dear Lily Luna,

Sorry this took so long, my parents(mum) has barely let me have time to myself. She's been intent on spending time with her growing boy. But I've told my parents and grandparents that you will be visiting us on Tuesday. My grandfather threw an enormous fit. It was probably one of the greatest moments in my life! My mum and grandmother are very excited to meet you, while my father's a bit hesitant. I was glad to hear that your brothers weren't happy as well. Maybe next time I can stay at your house. Haha.

I'll see you on Tuesday. I guess the others think we're all meeting up at the Leaky Cauldron at two o'clock. See you then.

Sincerely,

Scorpius Malfoy.

"What have you got there, Lil?" Teddy asked as he walked into the living room.

Lily smiled. "A letter from Scorpius. He just wanted to tell me that he's told his family that I'm coming over on Tuesday."

Teddy chuckled. "You should have a good time. It's a pretty big house."

Lily had almost forgotten that Teddy and Scorpius were related. "You've been there?" she asked.

Teddy nodded as he searched through his kitchen cabinets. "A few times with my grandma, but I actually don't really know Scorpius that well."

"He's a good guy," Lily told him as she refolded her letter.

Teddy smiled. "I trust your judgement. You're not stupid." Then he gave a sigh. "So, are you excited for your second year?"

"Yeah, kind of. Mainly I'm just excited to get back to school. I like it at Hogwarts," she replied.

Teddy nodded. "Yeah, so did I. It's a great place."

"I can't wait for Tuesday. Hanging out with the others is sure to be fun," Lily commented.

"So, you said you were hanging with Mitch Avery in Diagon Alley too, right?" Teddy asked.

Lily nodded. "Yeah, why?"

Teddy shrugged. "I know his older brother, Brandon. He's not a real close friend, but we have . . . mutual friends I guess, so I see him from time to time."

"I don't hang out with Mitch a lot, but he's one of Scorpius's friends, so he hangs around sometimes. He's pretty cool," Lily replied.

"Yeah, Brandon's a pretty cool guy too," Teddy commented. "Oh, and congrats on winning the Quidditch Cup this year. Did you guys win the House Cup too?"

Lily could help the smug smile. "Yeah, we crushed the other Houses. Our big Quidditch lead was what really helped though."

Teddy chuckled. "So, what are you doing after Tuesday?"

Lily tilted her head. "What do you mean?"

"Well, you're not really going to be home until after Tuesday. I was just wondering what you're doing after everything on Tuesday," he inquired.

Lily bit her lip. What would she do? Most likely she'd hide out in her room, rarely leaving, and locking the door when Rose and Hugo visited with their parents. Locking the door when any of the cousins visited. Then again, she had Louis.

"I don't know. Maybe I'll stay with Louis for a while, or see if he wants to stay," Lily suggested.

"You two seem to be getting along lately," Teddy hinted.

Lily shrugged. "He's the only cousin at school that likes me. I tend to take advantage of that."

Teddy didn't look upset or disappointed. He only nodded. "I don't blame you. I would too."

Lily raised a brow. "You're not going to tell me I should be the bigger person and apologize? That me and the others shouldn't be fighting like this?"

Teddy smiled wryly. "Honestly, I'm staying neutral. I don't want to get involved and have some of my cousins hate me. Because if I had to get involved and chose the side I agreed with, I'd have to agree with you."

Lily's eyes widened in shock. "You agree with me?" Teddy? A former Gryffindor going against his House?

Teddy chuckled. "I never cared about Houses when I was in school. I mean, I may have cared about my House when it came to Quidditch, but otherwise they never mattered. My options and friends would have been very limited if I'd felt like that. All that I care about now is my family, not what House they're in. And if they make it into a different House than I did, then I think that the House must be pretty good."

Lily got up from her place on the couch, and hugged her brother tight.

When Tuesday came Lily was taken home, but she didn't stay long, which she was thankful for because Rose and Hugo were visiting with their parents again. She quickly packed a bag, left it by the fireplace, and then when it was almost two o'clock, she said goodbye to the adults and Flooed to The Leaky Cauldron.

"Lily!" Lily looked to her left to see that Lola, Lana, and Lars were already there. Lola pulled Lily into a tight hug. "How are you?" she asked.

Lily laughed as she pulled away from the embrace. "It barely been a week, Lola."

Lola rolled her eyes as the other two laughed. "Yeah, but you have brothers that can't stand you, so I have a right to ask. So?"

Lily chuckled. "I only had to put up with them for a few days. Then I was at Teddy's, and now I'm here. I wrote this stuff to you already." Lily continued to laugh when Lola rolled her eyes.

The fireplace behind them roared high, and then Mitch stepped out. "The party already here?" he asked loudly.

"Almost," Lana answered. "We're just waiting for Scorpius and Jace now."

"What's the plan for today anyways?" Lars asked.

"We'll decide when everyone's here," Mitch told him.

The fire roared again. "Am I the last one?" Jace asked as he walked through the fire.

"Close, but no. You beat Scorpius," Lily replied.

"By a second," Scorpius countered as he stepped out from the fireplace. He grinned at them all. "Are we all here?"

"Now we are," Mitch answered.

"So what's on the agenda?" Jace asked.

"Can we stay and get something to eat?" Lana asked. "We've yet to eat lunch, and I'm starved."

"Me too. Anyone else hungry?" Mitch asked.

All the others but Lily agreed.

Lily shook her head. "My mother made me eat something first. I swear she's becoming more like my grandmother every day."

The other chuckled. "Ok, should I order, and you guys find a table?" Mitch asked.

"Why don't I order?" Lily suggested. She could see her aunt Hannah at the counter. "My aunt owns the place, and she always drops the price for me."

"Perfect!" Mitch cheered.

Lily laughed, but mentally took down what everyone wanted. After catching everything, she left them to find a table, and went to the counter.

"Hello, Lily," Hannah greeted. "What are you doing here?"

Lily shrugged. "I'm here with a few friends. I needed away from the house."

Hannah laughed. "Well what can I get you?"

Lily relayed the list to her aunt. "Oh, and seven butterbeers," she finished. "How much will this be?"

Hannah looked at her niece as she started to pull out the butterbeers. "On the house."

Lily raised a brow. "Are you sure?"

"We're busy today. It won't hurt anything," Hannah said with a smile. "I'll get it to your table when it's all done."

Lily smiled widely. "Thanks, Aunt Hannah."

"You're welcome, sweetie," she replied.

Lily made her way through the packed room, and over to the table of Slytherins. She took a seat between Lola and Scorpius. "It's on the way."

"How much is it costing us?" Mitch asked as he pulled out his wallet.

"It's on the house," Lily replied. "I told you she loves me."

Mitch stared at Lily in silence for a moment before reaching over the table and grabbing her hand. "I freaking love you!"

They all laughed. Lily flicked his hand.

"I'm sure Miley would love to hear that," Lana teased.

"Miley Flint?" Jace asked. "What do you mean?"

Lana grinned teasingly. "They've been dating since the middle of June."

"You're dating Miley Flint?" Jace said with a laugh.

"I think that's cute," Lola defended.

"Thank you, Lola," Mitch thanked.

"What's funny is that his mommy thinks he's too young to date," Lars laughed.

Mitch scoffed. "Crazy witch. I'm fourteen, that's not too young. My sister was fourteen, and hell my brother was fourteen when he lost his virginity."

"But Brandon's your mum's little angel," Scorpius argued.

Mitch rolled his eyes. "Angel my ass."

"Your brother was only fourteen?" Lana asked in surprise.

"That is a bit young," Lola agreed.

"Don't worry," Mitch assured, "he was drunk and barely remembers it."

Lily and the boys laughed. The other girls rolled their eyes. But it was all forgotten as their food and drinks floated over to their table. Lily just took sips of her butterbeer as the others all started to eat.

"So, what are we doing after this?" Lola asked.

"I figured we'd go into Twillfit and Tatting's and bug and mess with the employees and management," Mitch suggested.

"Yeah, until they get pissed and throw us out," Lana scoffed.

Mitch smiled smugly. "They'd never throw me out. My mum owns most of the store. She's the biggest and richest partner they've got. They have to respect me or risk getting fired. That's what makes annoying them so fun," he explained.

"I think we should do it!" Jace agreed with a laugh.

"Well how about the boys be children and mess with the employees, and us girls can act our ages?" Lana suggested.

"Sounds good to me," Lola agreed.

So the first thing Mitch did as they entered Twillfit and Tatting's was hurry over to an employee, and set off a small firework. As angry as the employee had looked, he did nothing but glare.

"What an ass," Lana muttered as she walked in.

Lily chuckled and followed her in. Lars and Jace immediately ran over to join Mitch in terrorizing three employees. Scorpius stood back with Lily and watched.

"Their energy is amazing," Scorpius joked.

Lily smiled. "Eventually one of those employees is going to snap."

"Well, hopefully we are far away when that happens," Scorpius replied. They both started walking to a display of different dress robes. "So, are we going straight to my house after the others leave?"

"Almost," Lily replied. "I just have to go home and pick up my bag. It's sitting right by the fireplace, so it shouldn't take even a minute."

"Am I Flooing home with you?" Scorpius asked.

Lily raised a brow, but smirked. "You really want to take a chance and step into the lion's den?"

Scorpius chuckled. "I'm sure I can make it out alive. It sounds fun."

Lily shook her head. "Ok, if you want to come with then you can."

"So how was staying at Teddy's flat?" he asked as he examined a set of dress robes.

"It was fun. He took me to the Stonewall Stormers and Appleby Arrows game," Lily answered.

"So you got to see the Arrows's Seeker get taken out up close then?" Scorpius laughed.

Lily laughed too. "Yeah, it was a serious injury, but the way he fell was actually pretty comical."

"Yeah I saw a picture of it in the Daily Prophet," Scorpius replied. He took the robe and they walked over to a full-length mirror. Scorpius slipped the robes over his shoulders, sliding his arms through the sleeves. Lily watched as he fastened it up, and flipped up the collar.

"That looks good on you," she complimented.

Scorpius nodded, his face focused on his appearance. "Yes, I think so too. I like the feel of silk, and the color of it is perfect."

"You do look good in black," she agreed.

Scorpius pulled off the robes and folded them over his arm. "I think I'll buy it. I'll have to thank my dad for the money he gave me." He looked back at Lily. "Is there something here you want?"

Lily shook her head. "Nah. I've got enough clothes."

"I don't think Lola and Lana are having the same thoughts," Scorpius said, pointing to the girls. They were both holding up different things, giggling and giving compliments.

Lily rolled her eyes. "I'm surprised Lana is like that."

"She hides it well, but at times like these, she's just as girly as anyone," he remarked.

"And we all know about Lola," Lily joked.

"She's your best friend," Scorpius teased.

Lily smiled. "Yeah, she is. Despite the girly part of her, you have to love her."

Scorpius smirked. "Like how even despite your smartass attitude she still loves you."

Lily hit his shoulder. "Shut up," she laughed. Scorpius laughed too.

Chapter Eight: Malfoy Manor

The group explored practically every shop in Diagon Alley, and had caused trouble in at least half of them. They decided to call it a night at a quarter to ten. For the last few hours they'd been running around, climbing building, and even delving into Knockturn Alley. But Lola was first to suggest going home.

"My parents told me to be home at nine. They're going to kill me," she had said, but she still smiling.

"Yeah, I'm supposed to home soon too," Jace reluctantly agreed.

"You kids and your curfews," Mitch teased.

Lana flicked him on the cheek. "Me and Lars have to be home by ten," she defended.

Mitch looked at Lily. "What about you?"

Lily shook her head. "No curfew, but I have to grab my bag from home before I go to his house," she said, nodding toward Scorpius.

"Well I don't have a curfew," Scorpius told him. "But since I'm bringing Lily over, my mum will probably want me home soon so she can meet her."

Mitch groaned, but he finally conceded to call it a night. They went back to the Leaky Cauldron, which was now practically empty. Lily and Scorpius let the others Floo home first, and then Lily threw the powder into the fire. She held out her hand. "Watch your step," she warned.

Scorpius took her hand. "Thanks for the warning."

They stepped in, and Lily stated her address. Then they were spinning, and Lily pulled him roughly when she saw her house. They stumbled out, and Lily landed on the floor. She pulled Scorpius with her, and landed with a 'thud' next to her.

"Ow," Lily muttered.

"What a landing," Scorpius agreed.

"Lily?"

Lily sat up at the sound of her mother's distant voice. "Yeah, Mum?" she called.

There were footsteps as the two started to stand, and then Ginny entered the room. "Are you ok?"

Lily laughed. "Yeah, we just had a bumpy landing."

"Yeah, sorry, Mrs. Potter. And, sorry for coming so late. We all lost track of time," Scorpius apologized.

Ginny then noticed the blonde boy with her daughter. She was a little surprised at how much the boy looked like Draco Malfoy. The only difference was that his hair wasn't slicked back, but fell just above his eyes. "Oh! You must be Scorpius."

Scorpius grinned. "Yes, that's me. It's a pleasure to meet you," he greeted, holding out his hand.

Ginny shook it with a smile. "It's nice to meet you too, Scorpius. Lily has been very excited about staying at your house for the night."

Lily rolled her eyes but blushed. Scorpius's grin grew. "Well, we're excited to have her. My mother is very excited to meet her as well."

"Well, I'll let you two go. Your bag is right you left it, Lily," Ginny told her, nodding toward her bag.

"Thanks, Mum," Lily said. She picked up the bag. Then she hugged her mother. "I'll be home tomorrow."

"Good, I feel like I've barely seen you," Ginny teased.

Lily smiled, holding back the little bit of guilt she felt. "Bye, Mum."

"Bye, sweetheart," Ginny said, pulling back from the hug.

This time, Scorpius led her to the fireplace. "Let me lead. Maybe we won't fall," he joked.

Lily rolled her eyes again. "Shut up."

Scorpius just shrugged innocently. "Malfoy Manor!"

They were spinning again, but this time Scorpius pulled them out. Lily stumbled a bit, but they didn't fall.

"A much better landing, don't you think?" Scorpius teased.

Lily laughed. "Just shut your mouth, Scorpius."

Scorpius laughed and took her bag. He placed it on a couch. Lily looked around the room. It was very posh and elegant. The carpet was a smooth gray color, the walls a silvery white. A few pictures decorated the walls, like any other home. Every bit of furniture was a silky green color, and looked very rich.

Scorpius grabbed her hand again. "Come on. My family is probably in the parlor."

Lily raised a brow, wondering how big the house was, but she let him lead her away. Lily looked at the houses as they walked through it. It seemed that every room and hallway was practically the same. Elegant, graceful, and very aristocracy.

"Your house is huge," she mumbled.

Scorpius chuckled. "Yeah, I'm told that a lot. It's been in the family for generations. So, even though my dad is called the 'master of the house' my grandfather still owns it. And when they both pass on, it'll be mine," he explained. He looked back at her. "Any house like that in your family?"

Lily shook her head. "Not really. I mean, my dad inherited a house from his godfather, Sirius Black. Apparently that house had been in their family for beyond generations. We don't live there, but my dad still keeps it clean and sturdy. Apparently, he and my mum lived there when they were out of school. But once they started a family they decided to move to Godric's Hollow."

"Why Godric's Hollow?" he asked. They stopped walking, a lone door to their right.

Lily shrugged. "I'm not sure. I mean, my dad said that his parents lived there during the war, but it's not there anymore. I mean, it's just a mess of rubble now. I'm not sure if that's why he chose to live there, just to be where his parents were."

"So, do you think it was a good idea?" Scorpius asked.

She sighed. "Well, I like it there. Why ever my dad chose to live there is personal, so I've never really asked. But every year on James's birthday, he, my mum, my aunt Hermione, and my uncle Ron always go to the cemetery. That's where they were buried."

Scorpius's brow furrowed. "Why on your brother's birthday? Shouldn't they be celebrating that dark event of your brother's birth?" he teased.

Lily smiled grimly. "They do. But it's not just his birthday. It's also the anniversary of their deaths."

Scorpius's face sobered a bit, but there was no pity. Lily was thankful for that. "I'm sorry."

Lily shrugged. "I never knew them, so it doesn't really bother me."

Scorpius leaned up against the wall. "My ancestors are buried here. It's where my grandfather plans to be buried, and he thinks that every Malfoy should follow the tradition."

"Do you want to?"

"No. Frankly, I think it's a little creepy, having dead people buried in the backyard. I mean, the backyard's huge, but still. But I shouldn't complain. I don't even plan to live here when I'm older. Once I turn seventeen, I'm out," he replied.

"Is that wise?" Lily asked.

He shrugged. "I've got enough money now to support myself. I am a Malfoy. I'm insanely spoiled and rich," he teased. "I think I can handle it." He gave a sigh, and he looked at the door next to him. "Well, shall we enter the snake pit?"

Lily laughed. "We shall."

Scorpius pushed off the wall, and knocked once on the door.

"Come in, Scorpius," a deep voice called from the other side.

Scorpius looked back at me once and gave her a smirk. Then he turned and opened the door. He waved her in. Lily stepped in hesitantly. The room was just as beautiful as she had expected it to be, but she still felt nervous. Four adults sat in the room, each blonde and elegant, and they were all looking at the two kids. Mainly at her. She noticed the older man's eyes held a burning glare.

"Mother, father, grandfather, and grandmother, this is Lily Luna," Scorpius introduced with a smirk. He looked at Lily. "These are my parents and grandparents. I'm sure you can tell which is which."

Lily gave a short and small laugh. She noticed the middle-aged man looking at her with hesitant eyes. He looked so much like Scorpius, excluding the receding hairline and the fact that the hair was slicked back.

"You look so much like your father," Lily commented aloud.

The middle-aged woman gave a laugh as she stood up. She walked toward them both. She gave Scorpius a hug, and then smiled at Lily. "Hello, Lily. I'm Scorpius's mother, Astoria."

Lily couldn't help but smile back. This woman seemed so sweet. "Hello, Mrs. Malfoy. I'm very happy to meet you."

"Likewise. Ever since my son came home for Christmas saying he had a new friend, I've been anxious to meet you. Come and sit down," she said, ushering both kids over to the couches in the middle of the room.

Scorpius's father stood up, and he held his hand out to her. "Hello, Lily. I'm Draco, Scorpius's father. And thank you for the reminder of our similarities," he teased.

Lily grinned as she shook her hand. "Nice to meet you, Mr. Malfoy. Don't worry. If you ever see me and my mum together, you'll most likely comment as well."

He smirked, the same as his son. "I don't have to see you side by side to see the large amount of similarities."

Lily gave a laugh as she and Scorpius sat down. The older woman, his grandmother smiled widely at her. Lily vaguely recognized her from pictures at Teddy's grandma's house.

"Hello, Lily. I'm Narcissa," she greeted.

"Teddy's grandma's sister," Lily acknowledged.

Her smile grew. "That's right. We've all been very anxious to meet you," she replied.

"Please speak for yourself, Narcissa." The voice was cold, and Lily noticed Scorpius tense sharply next to her. She looked over to the older man who had been burning holes through her since she'd walked in. You could see that time and age had taken its toll on him. His long hair wasn't really blonde, but more white. His eyes were haunted as they tried to burn through her.

"Father," Draco groaned dully.

"Calm yourself, Draco," Lucius Malfoy retorted.

Scorpius sighed through his clenched teeth. "Lily, this is my grandfather, Lucius Malfoy. The one who just loved the jacket you sent me," he mocked.

"Yes, I must say I was quite surprised to hear of a Potter being in Slytherin," Lucius remarked with a sneer.

Lily didn't let him goad her, but instead only raised a brow. "Yes, I'm a very rare case. But I've found that I enjoy being in the Slytherin House more than I enjoy just being around Gryffindors."

Now Lucius raised a brow. "Is that so? I find it hard to wrap my head around the idea of a Potter being in Slytherin. It's not right really."

Lily knew what he was hinting at. That he didn't accept her, and that he pretty much hated her. But Lily still wasn't bothered. "Well if it wasn't right, then I don't think the Sorting Hat would have put me in Slytherin. That hat's been around for years, I think I'll trust it." Lucius

Malfoy's face seemed to darken just a bit, and Lil heard Scorpius give a snicker.

"Really? I heard your brothers are Gryffindor Golden boys. Not normal for a Slytherin," he scathed.

"I heard you tried to kill my mother when she was twelve. Not normal for a man with morals." Lily almost slapped herself as the words slipped out. But she watched Lucius Malfoy carefully. His face was glaring, and he stood up. With a wordless flourish, he left the room. Lily looked over at a grinning Scorpius. "Sorry."

He was obviously trying not to laugh. "Don't be! That was awesome!"

"Scorpius," Astoria chided, although she didn't at all look angry. She looked at Lily apologetically. "I'm sorry about him. He's a bit old fashioned."

Lily sighed. "Don't worry. My uncle Ron is similar, but Scorpius just wasn't exposed to him today."

Scorpius snapped his fingers in mock disappointment. "Damn."

"Language, Scorpius Hyperion Malfoy," Astoria scolded, serious this time.

Lily bit her lip, hiding a laugh as Scorpius's cheeks turned red.

As the night continued, Lily found that she very much liked Scorpius's parents and grandmother. They were very nice, although his father was oddly quiet. Lily felt very comfortably with the Malfoy family, even if there was one who wanted her gone.

When they all decided to retire for the night, Scorpius escorted Lily up to the next floor. "My room is on the second floor. I've made up a makeshift bed for you in my room. This way my grandfather won't try to strangle you," he teased.

They stopped at a door that had "Scorpius Malfoy" written on it in an elegant silver script. Scorpius opened the door, and Lily stepped in. The room inside was only a little messy, which really surprised her. Her brothers and male cousins' rooms were always very messy. His

carpet was a pale white, and his walls were a light green. But his walls were practically completely covered. There were band posters, pictures of Quidditch stars and teams. A large Slytherin banner was over his bed. The comforter was a silky black, and his pillows were a Slytherin green. In one corner there was a desk that had papers cluttered on it. An empty owl cage sat at the end. Next to the desk was a bookcase, which was almost full with a large assortment of books and papers. Across the room was a silver dresser, and on top were a few items. His broom was leaning against it. And then across from his bed was a makeshift bed that looked similar to his actual bed.

"So, this is my room," he mumbled, his cheeks red. "It's not the greatest, I mean the posters and stuff are pretty old."

Lily waved him off. "I like it. It's very . . . comfortable. It's got a nice lived-in feeling to it."

He blushed again. "I did my best to make a comfortable bed for you. Just say something if you can't sleep on it. I'll switch ya."

Lily rolled her eyes. "I'm not stealing your bed."

He laughed. "I figured you'd say something like that. But my mum thinks you're sleeping on my bed, so don't say anything to her. She expects me to be a gentleman, even if you won't let me."

Lily laughed too. "Ok. I'll keep your secret."

He gave a small sigh. "Ok, the house elf put your bag by the bed. That door leads to the bathroom. You can go ahead and change in there, or take a shower if you want."

Lily's cheeks flushed a little. "Thanks." She grabbed her bag, and then walked into his bathroom. Lily was surprised at its size. It was bigger than her room at home. The bath was huge, and there was a shower that was separate from the bath. The floor was an emerald green tile, and the walls were a pale black.

Lily went through her normal nighttime routine. She changed into a shirt she'd taken from Teddy. She'd given all of James's shirts back to him. After cutting holes in them while angry. She put on a pair of shorts, and then walked back into Scorpius's room. He was standing

in front of a mirror, wearing a grey shirt and black sweat pants. He was running a comb through his blonde locks.

"What are you doing?" she asked, trying not to laugh.

"Get my hair to smooth out. If I don't it sticks up everywhere and never combs nicely in the morning," he defended.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Whatever you say, Scorp."

He gave me a mock glare as he looked at me in the mirror. "Don't you roll your eyes at me, Lily Lu. I'll come after ya."

Knowing he was watching, she rolled her eyes again. "I'm not afraid of you."

He put down the comb, and turned to grin at her deviously. "Oh, you shouldn't have said that."

Slowly he stepped toward her, and Lily sensed the devilish intent. "Scorpius, back up," she warned. "I'm serious." But he kept his pace. When Lily tried to move to the side, he pounced, wrapping his arms around her, and lifting her off the ground. Lily kicked at him. "Scorpius Malfoy, put me down!" she squealed.

"Are you scared of me yet?" he asked.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Yes, I'm mortally terrified of you. Now put me down!"

"You better be. I'm a very scary person," he teased, but he put her back onto her feet.

Lily smacked his shoulder. But she still smiled at him. "Goodnight, Scorpius."

He smirked. "Goodnight, Lily Lu."

Lily woke up, and was oddly relaxed. It took a moment for yesterdays events to hit her, and when they did she smiled. She rolled onto her stomach. No matter how uncomfortable Scorpius had thought the makeshift bed would be, it was actually very nice. It was

soft, and Lily sunk right into it. The covers were warm and silk against her skin. It had been a wonderful night of sleep.

Lily sat up, pushing the covers off of her. She could see Scorpius still sleeping, so she grabbed her bag and went into his bathroom. She took a quick shower, not wanting to take too long incase he woke up. But he was turning out to be just like her brothers were, because he slept on as she went through her normal morning routine. When she was dressed and ready, she walked over to his bed. He was sleeping on his side, his arms splayed out in front of him. His lips were parted as he pulled in quiet breaths. Lily thought he looked very peaceful.

She stood up, and started to jump. "Wake up, Scorpius!" she yelled next to him.

Scorpius shot up in shock. Lily stopped jumping and began to laugh. Scorpius took in small pants as he looked up at her. Then he groaned and dropped back down onto his bed. "You are insane," he chuckled.

Lily laughed. "I know. But your clock says that it's almost noon. We've slept through the morning."

Scorpius opened one eye to look at the clock on the wall across from him. "Well I'll be damned. Alright," he sighed, "I'm up." Slowly, he sat up. He kicked off the blankets. "Just give me a few minutes. Feel free to explore." He grabbed a few things, and then moved on to the bathroom. Within the minute, she could hear his shower running.

Lily got off the bed, and she took his offer, and started to look around his room even more. She moved to his bookshelf, looking at the different books. There were a few that she could tell had been textbooks from previous school years, but others were different. She pulled out a book on potions, and began to flip through it. There were tons of complicated potions in the pages, each of them high-class potions. Interested in Potions herself, she began to read some of the pages. She didn't notice how much time was passing.

"What are you reading?"

Lily jumped, startled. She turned to see Scorpius coming out of the bathroom. His hair was still a little damp, but he had dressed in black shorts and a white T-shirt. "What?" she asked, a little breathless. Her heart was still pounding from shock.

He chuckled, noticing her surprise. "I asked, what are you reading?"

Lily's cheeks flushed. "Oh. Just one of your potions books." He made a sound of understanding as he combed his hair. "Tell me, why do you have such an advanced book?"

Lily watched as he shrugged. "I like Potions class. It's a very easy and fascinating subject. So every now and then, I'll buy a book and read a little more on more advanced things."

Lily hummed in thought as she put the book back. "So, is there a plan for today?" She turned back and moved to sit on his bed.

Scorpius grinned at her in the mirror. "Of course. I thought I'd give you a small tour around the outside. There are a million things to do out there. There's even a space where we can fly."

Lily smiled. "Sounds great."

Scorpius put down his comb, and turned to face her. "Yes, it does. But first, I'm starved, so we're going to eat."

Lily laughed. "That sounds even better."

Scorpius lead her out of his room, and through the large house. Finally, he brought her to a large dining room. With a 'crack' a house elf appeared.

"What does young master need?" she squeaked.

Scorpius grinned. "Morning, Pitch. Could you get us breakfast, please?"

"Young master need not ask," she said with a bow. Then she was gone.

Scorpius looked back at Lily and grinned sheepishly. "You're not a big house elf rights fanatic?"

Lily shook her head. "I'm not as bad as my aunt, but I've been raised to respect them. My father has one as well, and he pays him. Even thought Kreacher doesn't always like it."

Scorpius nodded as they sat down. "Yes, my father does too, much to my grandfather's distaste. So I always treat Pitch with the utmost respect," he said with a grin.

Lily smiled. "You'll do anything to bug your grandfather, won't you?"

His grin grew. "Yeah. Our . . . distaste for each other is deeply rooted."

Then Pitch was back, and she set down a plate in front of them both. "Here you are, young master, and young master's friend. Enjoy."

Scorpius smirked. "Thank you, Pitch. Tell me, where is the rest of the family?"

"Master and Mistress ate earlier this morning. They've gone to the study. Your grandparents are somewhere else in the manor," Pitch answered.

Scorpius gave a nod. "Thank you, Pitch."

Pitch took that as a dismissal, and Apparated out of the room. The two kids ate, talking about various things. When they had finished, Scorpius had taken her to the backyard. Lily was dumbstruck.

"Wow," was all she could say.

The 'backyard' was acres long. From where she stood, she could see a very large garden, and large hedges that seemed to form a maze of sorts. In the distance, she could see the space that Scorpius had mentioned they could fly around.

Scorpius had laughed at her dumbfounded look. "Yes, it is quite big. And it goes beyond that big hill over there. But I barely go over there."

"Why not?" she asked. Why wouldn't he want to explore every bit of this yard?

"That's the graveyard of my ancestors. The one place that creeps me out," he explained. "I've been there maybe two times. Once on purpose, the second because I was just wandering around." Then he gave a sigh. "So, what shall we do? Take a fly, wander? Personally, I'm up for the first idea."

Lily nodded eagerly. "I think an afternoon fly is in order."

Scorpius grinned. "Perfect. I've even got an extra broom you can use. And it's fast, so no worries about being slow," he teased.

Lily rolled her eyes. "I could beat you in a race, no matter what broom I had," she retorted.

Scorpius raised a brow. "Is that a challenge?"

"What if it is?" she taunted.

He chuckled. "Oh, it's on, Lily Luna. Let's go."

Scorpius had moved to a broom cupboard, and pulled out two brooms. He handed one to Lily, and as soon as they were both holding a broom, they were up in the air, and racing around the large area. One race turned into two, and two became a hundred. They soon turned it into other competitions. A game of catch to see who would drop the ball first, seeing who could pull out of a dive closest to the ground without crashing, but no matter how much they razzed each other, the competition was friendly, and they both were laughing. They soon gathered the attention of Scorpius's parents, who had taken to watching the two from the ground. They soon began to act as referees for their games. But the night sky started to descend upon them, and the games had to end.

"Lily, won't your parents want you home soon?" Astoria called up.

Lily grimaced, but she knew that Mrs. Malfoy was right. She was only staying for the night before. She was supposed to be home today.

Scorpius seemed to think the same. "Really? It's not that late," he complained.

"I'm sure her parents will want to have her home for a while before school starts up again," Draco said with a grin. "I'm sure you'll see her again, son."

Both kids muttered small obscenities as they conceded, and lowered down to the ground. They hopped off their brooms, their faces a bit glum. Both adults laughed.

"Be sure to invite Lily over again, son. You two seem to have a lot of fun," Astoria hinted.

Scorpius's cheeks flushed a little. But before he could speak, his father spoke up again. "Well, Miss Potter, we're having a few friends over next month, and they're all bringing their kids. The house is usually packed. But I'm sure we'd all be delighted if you joined us that night," Draco invited.

Scorpius's face lit up. "Yeah, it's a bunch of Slytherin families. Jace and Lola's families, the Goyles, Flints. You should come!"

Lily lit up at the thought too. "Sure! I'm sure my parents won't mind!"

Draco gave a small smirk. "I'm glad to hear that. We never have a permanent day set, so I'll have Scorpius send you a letter when we have the date picked."

Lily smiled brightly. "Thank you, Mr. Malfoy."

"It's my pleasure, Miss Potter," he said with a nod.

"Why don't you escort Lily to the fireplace, Scorpius," Astoria urged with a smile.

Scorpius's cheeks flushed again, but he smirked over at Lily. "Well, I love being a gentleman. Shall we?"

Lily bit back a laugh as they started to walk back toward the large manor. "She does expect you to be a gentleman," Lily teased.

Scorpius gave a sigh as he grinned. "Yep. That's what she's raised me to be. I think I am a gentleman when it matters."

"But not full time," Lily replied.

He chuckled. "No. Not all the time. Just when it counts."

Lily had been a little disappointed when she got home. Staying at the Malfoys' was a lot of fun, and she honestly loved their backyard. But her parents were happy to have her home once she'd Flooed in. The bad part was that her aunt Hermione and uncle Ron were there once again, then again, she wasn't too surprised. They visited quite often.

"How was your night?" Ginny asked when her daughter had brushed off all the ash she received after Flooing in.

Lily smiled. "It was a lot of fun. Sorry I got home so late. We were flying around his backyard."

Ginny smiled. "Well, I'm glad to hear that you had fun."

"I had a blast. In fact, Mr. Malfoy invited me to visit them again. They have a big dinner with a bunch of friends and their kids, and he asked me to come," Lily hinted.

"Are you going to go?" Harry asked.

"I really want to, so if you'll let me," Lily mumbled.

Harry smiled. "Well, I see no problem. Besides, it sounds like you had fun yesterday. What did you do in Diagon Alley?"

Lily launched into a story of her day, keeping some details to a minimum. She didn't want her parents to know about some of the mayhem they all had caused. But soon her night turned a bit sour. She hadn't stopped talking with her parents and aunt and uncle until dinner was ready. Conversation continued during dinner, but Lily had kept silence. She felt even more like an outsider compared to her brothers and cousins, and a tension had pressed on her shoulders. It was as if her staying at the Malfoys' confirmed that she was no longer a part of them. No longer a friend. She felt miles away from them.

Lily hurried through dinner, and then ran to her room. She couldn't stand the feeling she was getting around them. Once her door was closed and she was in her room, Lily felt a little better. The mean

and angry looks were gone. There were no betrayed looks thrown at her. The glaring eyes had stayed behind. Quickly, Lily moved to her desk, and pulled out some paper and a quill.

Dear, Louis

Hey, cuz. I hope you've been having fun since you got home. I know I have. But I had a genius idea. You should stay over for a night or two over here. That way I won't have to sit and try not to kill my idiot brothers. How 'bout it?

Write me soon,

Lily

Lily handed the note to Regal, directing him on who to take it to. Regal flew off into the night, leaving Lily alone again. Lily began to take her things out of the bag she had taken to Scorpius's house. She pulled out a shirt, when something fell out, thumping as it hit her floor. Lily bent over to pick it up, and was surprised at what it was. It was the potions book from Scorpius's bookshelf. Lily flipped it open, and found a piece of paper under the cover.

Here's something to entertain yourself with while staying in the lions' den. Happy reading, Lily Lu. I'll see you at the dinner. –Scorpius

Chapter Nine: A Slytherin Dinner

Lily had started to do anything she could to not have to be alone with her brothers in the house. But she was lucky. James had started working for their uncle George at Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes in Diagon Alley, so he was gone for most of the day. Albus was either going to his best friend, Tyler Creevey's house, or he was somewhere else. Lily barely paid attention. Louis did stay for practically a week, but then he and his sisters went with their parents to see their relatives in France. Then she was constantly writing to her friends, and Lola would visit every few days.

August turned out to be a dreadful month for Lily though. Not really dreadful, but she could see how it would lead to dreadful times at school. Midway through the month, all the Potters sat at the table for breakfast, when an elegant owl came in with three letters, each baring the Hogwarts seal. Harry had passed one to each of his children.

"Here you are. Looks like we'll have to go shopping soon," he commented to Ginny.

Lily opened her letter, and looked over her list. She had an owl and a broom, but she would need the books obviously, and her potion kit was running low.

"Now way!" James exclaimed from his seat at the table. Like the rest of her family, Lily looked over at her brother. He was reading his letter with a look of shock.

"What's up, bro?" Albus asked.

James dropped his letter and scrambled for his envelope. He pulled a badge out of it. There was a bold P on it. Lily stared in shock at the prefect's badge in her brother's hand. James looked at his parents happily and smugly. "I made prefect!"

Lily bit back a groan as her family congratulated him. James being a prefect would be a nightmare. She could easily see him cornering any Slytherin he could find. He'd give major punishments for minor things. She could already feel the dread that her second year could easily become.

"Your grandma will be very happy to hear about this," Ginny said happily. "She always got excited when one of us made it."

James didn't lose the smug smile for days. A few days later, the entire family met up at the Burrow, and Grandma Weasley had insisted on making a big deal about it. But for Lily it just got worse, because Molly had made prefect as well. Not that she wouldn't take advantage of it like James, but she would never shut up and be annoyingly superior about it. And Lily was right.

"I knew I'd be prefect," Molly said to the other girls, brushing her red curls off of her shoulder. They were all sitting in Ginny's old room. Their grandmother had stuck them in together, even though they didn't all get along, and Lily could see prospects of a fight breaking out, because Dominique had a bad attitude toward everyone in the family, and she would start arguments at the simplest things.

"I mean, out of my year of Gryffindor girls, who else would they choose?" Molly questioned snobbishly. "I mean, the other girls are so . . . childish sometimes. They probably wouldn't be able to handle the responsibilities."

"Perhaps," Dominique seethed, finally looking up from her magazine, "but they might at least shut up about it, and spare us from hearing it!"

Molly just gave Dominique a nasty look. Rose intervened, probably not wanting a fight. Lily was a bit disappointed. She was wanting to see who would have won that one. "I'm glad you and James made it, Molly. You two will do great."

Molly sniffed huffily. "Well, I know I will, but I worry about James." Lily rolled her eyes. So she wasn't alone? "I mean, he can be a child, and I wouldn't be surprised if he tried to take advantage of his new position. That would be just like him."

"Just shut your mouth, Molly!" Dominique snapped. "We don't freaking care!"

"Don't be such a brat, Dominique!" Molly retorted.

"Well you're being an annoying bitch!" Dominique hissed. Molly seemed affronted at her language. "No one here cares what you

think of being a prefect, or about the other girls in your year, or about how stupid James is. We don't care about your opinions, and we didn't ask! So just shut up!"

"Amen," Lily said with a laugh. She looked at Dominique. She was only two years older, but Dominique had never really liked any of her cousins. But Lily couldn't help but think that she was the only girl cousin that Lily would ever really get along with.

"Thank you," Dominique said with a sigh, apparently happy to have someone openly on her side. Lily knew that even if they didn't say it, the other girls wanted Molly to shut up. Back when they all got along, they'd often talked about how Molly could be annoying.

Lily gave another laugh. "Well, before a hair pulling fight starts, I'm going to leave. I'd really rather not get sucked into it." Lily stood from her spot next to the bed, and she started for the door.

"Yeah, I'm gone too. I'd rather catch dragonpox then stay in a room with Molly," Dominique muttered, and she followed Lily out of the room. Lily stopped walked just outside the room, but Dominique continued down the hallway. Lily watched as her cousin's red locks shined as she left. Lily stared at the door that held the other girls. She couldn't go downstairs with the others, because the adults would ask why she wasn't with the other girls. And an honest answer would not help. So without any other options, Lily followed Dominique down the hall.

"Why are you following me?" Dominique asked, not turning to look at Lily.

Despite her not being able to see it, Lily shrugged. "I can't go downstairs, and I'm not staying in room with Molly. I'm just taking my only option."

"You can just stand in the hall?" Dominique grumbled.

Lily gave a small laugh. "No, I thought we could sit in a room and ignore each other."

Dominique stopped at the door to their uncle Charlie's old room. She looked at Lily. Her blue eyes were cold and untrusting, but Dominique gave a dry grin. "Sounds like fun," she replied. She

pushed open the door, and both girls walked in, Lily closing the door behind them. Dominique went to lie on the bed, and she went back to her magazine. Lily went over the desk, and started rummaging for a piece of paper. When she found one, she began to write a letter to Lola.

"What are you doing?" Dominique asked her.

Lily didn't turn to look at her. "I'm writing a letter to a friend."

Dominique scoffed. "Why? You'll be seeing her in a few weeks anyway."

Lily rolled her eyes. "I know, but she wrote me a letter, and I haven't had a chance to write one back. You don't write back to your friends?"

Dominique scoffed again. "I tell them not to write me. It's pointless to just rant back and forth. I write if I want to hang out, but otherwise, no."

"Ah, so you write so that you can use them to get out of the house and pass time," Lily commented honestly.

"Pretty much," Dominique said back, just as honest.

"Hm," Lily hummed, but the girls said nothing more to each other.

For hours, the girls sat in silence. Dominique read her magazine, while Lily wrote letters to friends that she hadn't been able to reply back to. After writing one to Lola, she wrote for Jace, remembering that he had written to her a few days ago. She had planned to write back that day, but her family ended up going to Diagon Alley, and she forgot.

A knock sounded on the door.

"Leave!" Dominique yelled back.

But the door opened anyway, and Louis stepped in. Lily laughed, wondering what would have happened if it had been an adult behind the door. Louis ignored his sister. "Hey, Lil, you've got a letter."

Lily turned and raised a brow. "What?"

"Some owl came and dropped this off. It's got your name, so I offered to bring it up to you. And you're lucky I grabbed it first before one of the other cousins," he commented.

"Why is that?" Lily asked.

"Because it's from Scorpius Malfoy, and chances are they would have read it," Louis replied, handing the envelope to Lily.

Lily shook her head, but smiled at her cousin. "Thanks, Louis."

He patted her shoulder. "No problem, cuz."

Lily turned back in her chair and looked at the fancy looking envelope. Lily felt her insides shaking with excitement as she hoped that this was the letter of the date when she would go back to the Malfoys' manor. The envelope looked too official to be a casual letter. She opened it, and pulled out what oddly did look like a casual letter.

Dear Lily Lu,

Sorry about the envelope, but my mum thinks I sent you a fancy and unnecessary invitation to the dinner. Really, it would tell you the same thing I'm about to tell you. The dinner is on the 26th. You should probably come over at about . . . five o'clock maybe. The dinner is at six, but us 'kids' always hang around for an hour or so while the parents go off and be boring. Also, it's dumb formal dinner every year, so keep that in mind. But if you were to wear jeans and a shirt, you would be my hero. I've asked my friends to do that, but they all chicken out. I don't because my mum would kill me.

Here's hoping you have the guts,

Scorpius Malfoy

Lily rolled her eyes. He always tried to do what he wasn't supposed to. But it made her laugh. The idea of it being formal did suck, because she hated wearing dresses.

"What's with the disgusted look?" Dominique mocked.

"I'm going to a big dinner at Malfoy Manor, and I have to wear a dress," Lily replied.

Dominique laughed. Lily sent a small and halfhearted glare at her cousin. "You're going to wear a dress?" she asked, laughing even more.

Lily scowled. "Shove off. I have to. It's a formal dinner. And it's better than just sitting at home."

Dominique finally began to calm. "Well, you've got me there. But do you even have a dress? I can't imagine you having one."

Lily sighed. "I'm sure I've got one."

"I've probably got one you can borrow," Dominique offered.

Lily looked back at her cousin and raised a confused brow. Dominique was offering to lend her something? Dominique, who hated all of her cousins? The ice queen being nice? "What's in it for you?" Lily demanded.

Dominique rolled her eyes. "Nothing, just more room in my closet. If you don't want one, that's fine."

"But why are you offering to lend me anything?" Lily asked. "It's not like we're friends."

Dominique shrugged. "I know that. But out of all the cousins, I get along best with you, even if that isn't say much. So do you want one?"

Lily stared at her cousin with surprised eyes. "Um . . . sure. Thank you, Dom."

Dominique looked back at her magazine. "It's fine. I'll send you a green one. I imagine you'd look good in that color."

Lily didn't reply, but instead turned back to the desk. She felt like a miracle had just happened. Dominique was being nice to someone in her family? That never happened. The only person that she was even remotely nice to in their family was her sister Victoire. Lily was

quite surprised at the change. She and Dominique had gotten into fights often, yet she was offering her a dress to wear? It baffled Lily.

When it came time for everyone to gather at the enlarged dinner table, Lily couldn't help but to try and break her brother's proud and annoyingly smug grin.

"Mum, Dad, I got a letter from Scorpius today," Lily mentioned. She caught practically everyone's attention, even if they tried not to show it. But she had caught James's attention openly, and that smile left, and was replaced by a scowl.

"Really? Is that who that letter was from earlier?" Ginny asked.

"Yes, he wanted to tell me when that big dinner is. It's on the twenty-sixth. Can I go?" Lily asked nicely.

"Sounds fine to me," Harry told her with a smile.

James had sent glares at Lily for the rest of the night.

Two days before the dinner at the Malfoys', Lily received a box from Dominique.

"What's Dom sending you a box for?" Ginny asked casually, glancing with curiosity at the box on the table.

Lily hesitated. Her brothers were there, and she didn't want to hear any sarcastic remarks about it. But her mother and father were both looking curious as to what was in it. She didn't think they'd let her play it off. Everyone knew about Dominique's attitude toward her cousins.

"Um, that dinner I'm going to is a formal one, so she offered to lend me a dress. I'm assuming that's what it is," Lily mumbled.

Her mother looked at her in surprise. "Dominique is lending you a dress? And you're going to wear it?"

Lily rolled her eyes. "Yes, I am. Um . . . I'm going to take this upstairs." Lily picked up the box, and started toward her room. She ignored the confused and angry looks her brother threw at her.

When she closed her door, she placed the box on her bed, and took off the lid. She picked up the dress, taking a look at it.

She had chosen a green one, and Lily laughed at it. It was what she and the others called a Slytherin green. The fabric was like silk, but Lily couldn't imagine that Dominique would lend her a silk one. The straps were thin, and it tightened around the middle, and the skirt flared out. Lily placed it carefully on her bed, and then noticed a pair of green shoes in the box as well. Lily pulled them out as well, and found a note in the box as well. Lily pulled it out, surprised to even get shoes with the dress, let alone a note.

Here's that dress. I'm sure you'll like it. Don't worry about sending it back, just keep it. I don't ever wear it, and I really don't want it back. I don't think I look good in green. So if you send it back then I'll kill you.

Dom

Lily rolled her eyes at the note. Only Dominique could be an ice queen while being nice. Lily carefully hung the dress up, and placed the shoes in her closet. She moved to her desk, and pulled out a piece of parchment. Then with hesitant fingers, she wrote back to Dominique.

Thanks for the dress. It's really pretty. I didn't think you were serious about the whole green thing. And since sending the dress back isn't worth dying over, I guess I'll keep it. I owe you, Dom, but don't think much of it.

Lily

Lily hated that last thought. She did owe Dominique after this. But then again school was almost here, and Dominique would probably go back to ignoring her and the rest of the cousins. And hopefully, she'd forget all about it by the time they saw each other again. So Lily gave the note to Regal to deliver, no longer thinking anything of it.

When the 26th came along, Lily felt nerves invade her veins again. She hated dresses, and she hated formal things. She had dreaded every formal dinner and parties the ministry had that her father had taken her to. They were always terribly boring, and once again, she

hated dresses. She'd really rather wear jeans and a T-shirt or something. Lily blamed it on being around too many boys, not to mention that her mother wasn't very 'girly'. And it didn't help that some of her cousins had decided to visit. Lily was starting to wonder if James had asked them to come over because it bugged her, or if they were begging their parents to visit so they could bug her. Either way, Lily had the feeling it was just to make her uncomfortable.

There was a knock on her door, making Lily jump. It was only four, but she had been staring at the dress on her bed for the past ten minutes. "Who is it?" she demanded, fearful of one of her brothers barging in.

"Your mother. May I come in?" her mother's witty reply came back.

Lily almost laughed. "Yeah, go ahead." Her mother stepped in, closing the door behind her. "Sorry, I thought you were one of the boys."

"It's fine." She looked over the bed. "Is this the dress Dominique sent you?"

Lily nodded. "Yeah. She thought green would be a good color for me."

Ginny moved to sit next to the dress. "It does. You're like your father in that way." Lily smiled, but rolled her eyes. "So, are you going to get dressed? You have a little less than an hour."

Lily raised a brow. "It doesn't take me that long to get ready, Mum," she assured.

Ginny chuckled. "I didn't think it would actually. What are you going to do with your hair?" she asked, brushing some of it away from her daughter's face.

Lily ran a hand through her hair as well. "Nothing. I thought I'd just leave it down."

Ginny hummed for a moment. "Well, you should find some way to keep it out of your face."

Lily smiled, trying not to laugh. That was something her mum told both her and her brothers. Albus got it the worse, mainly because his hair was so messy that it was almost impossible to get away from his eyes. "I'll try, Mum," Lily told her.

"Your cousins are downstairs. Are you going to come down and spend time with us before you go?" Ginny asked.

Lily hesitated. She knew her mum didn't like the fighting that was going on between her and her cousins, but Lily wasn't sure if she wanted to be glared at, or stared at distrustfully.

Ginny seemed to sense that, and she sighed. "Ok. But at least come down when the Scamanders get here. Aunt Luna loves talking with you." She started for the door.

"Wait! Aunt Luna's coming over?" Lily asked, excitement in her voice. She loved her godmother. She was so fun, and the twins were just as fun, if not overly energetic. And Uncle Rolf told the coolest stories.

Ginny smiled. "Yes, I invited them over. And I think the boys might be staying the night, along with the others. So please come down." Then Ginny stepped out of the room.

Lily couldn't stop smiling. Sure, the fact that Hugo and Rose were staying wasn't the greatest, but the fact that Lorcan and Lysander were was good. She loved the twins. They were so fun. But Lily did stay up in her room until she heard the arrival of the Scamanders. Then she was racing down the stairs. And luckily, she caught her godmother walking toward the kitchen.

"Aunt Luna!" Lily cheered, hugging her tightly. Sure, she wasn't really an aunt, but she might as well have been. All the cousins called her that.

Luna hugged her goddaughter back. "How are you, Lily?" she asked.

Lily smiled. "I'm ok, I guess." She was happy to hear that dreamlike quality to her aunt's voice. It was just an Aunt Luna thing that Lily liked.

Luna patted Lily's head. Normally, Lily would have been irritated, but not with Luna. "That's good. I was glad to hear about you being in a different House."

Lily raised a brow. "Really? Why?" she couldn't help but ask.

"Well, it makes you the most interesting, which really suits you," Luna replied honestly.

Lily couldn't help but laugh. Her aunt had some of the strangest logic. "Are the twins in the living room?" Lily hadn't talked to them in forever, since before the last year. She wanted to see them.

Luna nodded. "Yes, I believe that's where they ran off to."

Lily smiled. "Ok. I'll go find them."

"Good luck," Luna told her with a smile of her own.

Lily turned and walked toward the living room. All of the kids were in there, and they really paid no attention to Lily. Except one.

"Hello, Lily." Lily turned to see Lysander sitting on the arm of a chair. "How are you?"

Lily smiled. Lysander hadn't changed a bit. He was still really skinny, even though he was a Beater. His blonde hair was unruly, falling to his eyes. Those eyes were a light blue color, and always seemed as if he was daydreaming, even when he had all of his attention focused on you.

"Hey, Ly. I'm pretty good. You?" Lily asked.

He smiled, his teeth pearly white. "I'm doing good." Then he gave a sigh. "I feel like I haven't talk to you in forever."

Lily nodded. "Tell me about. I didn't really see you at all last year, except when my team whipped yours at Quidditch," she teased.

Lysander rolled his eyes, but still smiled. "Haha. Although I have to admit, you play very well. I was happy that you beat Al."

Lily almost laughed. "Really? Why?"

"Because he got a really big head after winning every game in our second year, and it was annoying. It was nice to see him be knocked down," Lysander replied.

Lily couldn't help but laugh. "So was I. It was a wonderful feeling."

"It was wonderful to watch," Lysander agreed. He tilted his head, cracking his neck. "So, what are you doing tonight? I hear you're going to Malfoy's?"

Lily nodded. "Yep. I'm going to . . . well, I guess you'd call it a Slytherin dinner at the Malfoys' manor. It's a big formal dinner with a bunch of Slytherin families."

"Is that how they put it on the invitation?" Lysander joked.

Lily giggled. "Not exactly, but that's how I've perceived it."

Lysander fell back, laying across the chair. "I hope you have fun. My brother and I are staying the night, so we can talk more when you get back."

Lily smiled at the idea. She was glad that at least one of the others was going to be happy when she got home. That one of them was going to want to be around her. Because inside she knew that once she left to the Malfoys', she would be a traitor. And once she got home, they would probably avoid being around her at all. That, or they'd throw remarks at her as soon as she walked in the house. Not to mentioned the possibility of both happening.

But apparently, the others could hear the conversation. "That's right, Lily. When are you leaving for the snake's house?" James sneered. "Also, try not to stink when you come home. After all, the snake you're hanging around with is dirty."

Lily ignored her brothers' comments, something she taken to doing lately. She didn't like fighting at home. It bothered their parents, and Lily wanted to avoid upsetting them.

"Of course she hangs out with a dirty snake. They're two of kind, they've got to stick together," Albus agreed.

Once again, Lily kept quiet. Not turning to look at her brothers, not even acknowledging that they had spoken. She kept her eyes on Lysander, who was looking back at her. Then he smiled. "You are something else, Lil," he told her.

Lily raised a brow. "Why do you say that?"

"Because you can let them ridicule you, and not say a thing back. You have got some willpower," he explained.

Lily just smirked, and looked back at Rose. "No, I'm just being the bigger person." Rose just gave her a disapproving look. Both she and Lily knew that her attitude would change once they were at school.

Lysander patted her shoulder. "Glad to hear it, but I hope it doesn't last. It's not as fun to watch," he teased.

Lily sighed, smiling at him. "Don't worry. It's not as fun for me either."

When it was almost five o'clock, Lily had left to go and get dressed. She slipped the green fabric over her body, and looked at herself in the mirror. She guesses that she did look ok in green, but she still didn't really like wearing a dress. It didn't matter what the color was. She slipped on the shoes, and decided to wear the headband Scorpius had made. It did what her mother had asked, and helped keep her hair away from her face.

Lily watched herself in the mirror. She still had time before she had to Floo over to the Malfoys'. But she was the only one with that thought apparently.

"Lily, hurry up! Scorpius is waiting!" her mother called up.

Lily almost fell to the floor in shock. Her head whipped toward the door, even though there was no one there. Scorpius was here? In the house? With her brothers? Oh, Merlin! Lily hurried out of her room, quickly slamming her door shut behind her. She practically ran down the stairs, thankful Dominique had sent her flats to go with the dress. When she got to the livingroom, she found Scorpius standing by the fireplace, and everyone else was in there as well. Her brothers and Hugo were glaring at him, and her uncle Ron eyed him uneasily.

Scorpius looked very elegant as he stood quietly by the fireplace. He wore a black button-up shirt, with black pants and shoes. His hair wasn't slicked back, but instead his bangs were combed to the side, and away from his eyes. What made Lily's smile was that he was wearing the jacket she'd sent him for Christmas.

When Scorpius saw her, he grinned. "Hey, Lily Lu," he greeted, finally bringing it to everyone's attention that she was in the room.

Lily felt her cheeks heat up a little. "Hello, Scorpius. What are you doing here?"

His grin got bigger. "Well, I thought I would be a gentleman and come and get you. Plus, I quite like it here," he complimented.

Lily almost laughed. She knew why he 'like it'. It bugged her brothers that he was here. "I'm not surprised," she commented.

"When can I expect my daughter to be home, Scorpius?" Ginny asked with a smile.

Scorpius gave her a grin as well. "Well, dinner is at six, and I think the earliest anyone has ever left was . . . half past eight o'clock? But if there's a certain time that you want her home, I'll make sure she's here by then."

Lily rolled her eyes as she walked toward him. "Suck up," she muttered. Scorpius gave her a smirk.

Ginny shook her head. "Just have her home at a decent time."

Scorpius gave a nod. "I can do that. Have a good evening," he said with a grin.

Lily grabbed his arm. "Let's go," she said with a roll of her eyes.

Once they had Flooed over, Scorpius laughed. "So I'm a suck up for trying to make peace in the Potter household?"

Lily shook her head. "No, you're just trying to get my mum to like you, because you think it'll bug my brothers."

He snapped his finger. "Ah! My secret's out. So, I'm a suck up when I'm trying to get your mum to like me?"

"Yep," Lily said with a smile. "But I guess that's not a bad thing. She usually has the final word in our house, so that might get you places," she teased.

Scorpius grinned. "Alright! I'm glad to hear that."

Lily shook her head and laughed. But then she noticed that they were alone. "Where are the others?" she asked.

"Oh! The adults stick us kids in the upstairs study. That's where the others are. Come on," he told her.

"Who's all here?" Lily asked as they walked through the large house.

"Um . . . Lola and some of her siblings. Jace, Lana and Lars, Mitch and all of his siblings. My cousins, the Boles, the Flints, the Vaiseys and the Montagues."

Lily raised a brow. "That's a lot of people."

"A lot of kids. It's like . . . more than twenty at the least. Although the older ones are usually with adults, since they feel that they're too mature for us," Scorpius rolled his eyes. "Marty, Ginger, and Brandon are all with the adults now."

"Marty?" Lily questioned.

"Lola's oldest brother. The oldest Pritchard. He's a cool guy, not stuck up like Ginger. But he's working in my dad's department of the Ministry, so they're talking business. That's what most of the older men do at this dinner? Discuss business, our grades, and on the odd occasion, Quidditch teams," Scorpius explained.

"What do the kids talk about?" Lily asked with a grin.

"Quidditch, the opposite sex, school, and how dumb the older kids look trying to be adults," he listed. They stopped at a door, and Scorpius pushed it open, revealing a room that was packed with kids of all ages, each broken into groups around the room. Lily was

surprised to see a bunch of kids she knew looked so elegant. Especially Mitch. She never thought she'd see him look so formal.

"Hey, Scorp's back!" Mitch announced.

"And Lily Luna's with him!" Raven Bole added with a grin. "It's nice to see our star player joining us!"

Lily rolled her eyes. "Nice to see you without dirt stains on your face," she retorted.

The other guys laughed, while Raven just chuckled. "Be careful, Lily Luna. I'm the new Quidditch Captain, so I'm your chance getting back on the team."

Lily raised a brow. "Congratulations, on becoming captain. But do you really think that you can get someone better than me?"

"Oh, arrogant are we?" he joked.

"Just right," Lily threw back with a grin.

Scorpius chuckled. "Face it, Rave, she's got ya beat on that one," he replied.

Raven picked up a glass from the table next to his seat on the couch. "True. It makes me wonder if I should even hold tryouts. I mean, I have to have a tryout for Aaron's old position, but I don't think any little second year is going to beat what we've already got."

"What if one of the fifth years or someone else tries out though?" Lily asked.

Raven shrugged. "They better be good. At least better than some of the pathetic tryouts we had last year."

"Don't be too hard on them. Besides, Tyson Derrick's not going to be trying out anymore, so we won't have a priss throwing a fit when he doesn't make it," Dante Montague laughed.

"Yeah, I don't think I'll be as nice as Aaron when someone throws a fit," Raven replied.

"I was a captain for three years. You learn to keep your temper in check," Aaron told him.

"I'll be one for a year. They won't be that lucky," Raven reminded him. "I don't think I'll have Seeker tryouts. It's not like anyone's going to beat Lily here, so that'd be a waste of time. And I'll probably let Lars here keep his position. I'm too used to teaming with him as a Beater."

"Awesome!" Lars cheered happily.

"Well, Adrian, Dante, looks like we're going through tryouts," Scorpius joked.

"Oh, don't bitch," Raven told them. "I'm still trying to decide if I'm going to hold the tryouts for you guys."

"You should tryout, Mitch," Dante remarked.

Mitch shook his head. "Nah. I don't do Quidditch. I mean, it's fun to watch and cheer for, but I'm not a big fan of playing the actual game."

"Wuss," Lars jeered with a grin.

Mitch chuckled. "Quick survey. How many upcoming fourth years here with a girlfriend?" Mitch raised his hand, while Lars and Scorpius kept their hands down. "No, come on. Up high, I while I count."

Scorpius rolled his eyes. "Same guys, how many of us aren't whipped." Scorpius and Lars raised their hands. Mitch started to raise his, but Lars smacked it down. The rest of them laughed.

Mitch just gave Scorpius a mock glare. "Hey, hey . . . shut up." Then he too laughed.

"You boys giving Mitch a hard time again?" Lily turned to see that Lana had joined their group.

"It's too fun to pass up," Scorpius said with a laugh.

"What do you want, sis?" Lars asked.

Lana rolled her eyes. "I'm here to save Lil from this large group of stupidity." Lana grabbed her arm. "Come on. I'll help you save a few brain cells."

Lily laughed, but let herself be pulled away from the boys. Lana dragged her toward a smaller group of girls. Some of them were from Lily's year. Lola, Megan Montague, and Shannon Flint were all in Lily's year. There was Amanda Baddock, and the other girl was who Lily recognized as Miley Montague, a girl in Lana's year, and as she now knew, Mitch's girlfriend. But surprisingly, there were two other girls there too. But they were older, one was a sixth year, and another a seventh year. Lily vaguely knew them as Stacy West and Scarlet Glass. Why were they here?

"What are Scarlet and Stacy doing here?" Lily asked.

"They're Raven and Adrian's dates. They didn't want to be paired with one of the little ones," Lana explained.

Lily raised a confused brow. "What?"

But Lana didn't seem to hear her. "Hey, girls, I've saved her!" Lana joked as they approached the group.

Lola gave an excited squeal. "Lily, you came!" She pulled Lily in a tight hug. Lily had expected it. Lola seemed to hug every time they saw each other after a brief period apart. "And you look so pretty! I never thought you'd actually wear a dress," Lola replied.

"Neither did I, actually," Lana agreed teasingly.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Shove off. It's not even mine. It's my cousin's."

"Which one?" Lola asked.

"The bitchy one," Lily teased.

"Oh, Dominique," Lana said with a nod. Lily laughed at the fact that Lana knew who she meant, but then again they were in the same year.

"I'm surprised you came, Lily," Shannon Flint told her. "From the stories Scorpius has told, his grandfather doesn't really like you."

Lily rolled her eyes. "Well if I was afraid of him, then that would be a different story. But I'm not, so I don't care."

Lana laughed. "Oh, wow. Scorpius found the perfect friend." Lily gave a laugh too. "How was meeting Lucius Malfoy for you?"

"Well, it was much like standing right outside the line of reach of the Whomping Willow. It tries to hit you, but it's just not close enough," Lily compared.

Lana laughed. "Well just wait, he'll probably try to take another shot at dinner tonight."

Lily sighed. "Oh, joy."

"Lily!" Before Lily could turn to see who had said her name, arms wrapped tightly around her from behind. She was lifted off her feet for a moment before being let go. She whipped around to see that it was Jace standing behind her. He was dressed formally as well, but the aristocrat look was ruined by his ears poking out of his hair.

Jace looked her over as well. "You look nice, Lil."

Lily grinned. "You look very handsome as well. Just one problem." She reached out and touched the tip of one ear. The other girls laughed, Lola laughing the loudest.

Jace rolled his eyes. "I thought they looked handsome as well. I did my best to groom them nicely," he joked.

Lily rolled her eyes, and ruffled his hair. Jace waved her hand off. "Don't worry. They look dashing," Lily assured with a smile.

Jace grinned. "Why thank you, my dear Lily."

"Way to say hi to the rest of us, big ears," Lola said with a roll of her eyes.

Jace looked over at her. "Sorry. I would have hugged you too, but I didn't want to take a chance of accidentally touching your hair and getting my hands dirty," he apologized with a fake smile.

Stacy grinned at Lola. "Aren't you lucky? You two will spend the next six years together," she joked. Lola gave a small groan.

Jace groaned louder. "Man, don't remind me of school! We have very few days of freedom left!"

Lily laughed. "It's not that bad."

"For smart people," Jace disagreed. "For dumb people like me, it sucks."

Lola raised a brow. "Well, I can understand how you would hate it then."

Jace gave her a wry grin. "Coming from the girl who got just a little more than a seventy on one of her exams?"

"Better than you," Lola argued.

Lily turned to the other four girls. "I'd just ignore them. The fight's not going to end for another hour," she said with a grin.

Lana laughed. "Yeah, I've started to realize that."

"So, Lily, how's living with two Gryffindors?" Miley Flint asked.

Lily almost rolled her eyes. She was getting used to other Slytherins asking that question. "They're barely home anymore. James works, and Albus hangs around some other dumb Gryffindor," she answered.

"James Potter got a job?" Scarlet asked with a laugh. The others looked just as surprised and amused.

Lily grinned too. "Yeah, he's working for my uncle at Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes. He and Fred work together. A deathtrap really."

"Wow, that makes me want to visit the store all the more," Jace joked.

"Oh, Lily," Megan addressed, "when are you leaving?"

Lily shrugged. "I don't know. My mum just wants me home sometime tonight. My cousins and the Scamander twins are staying over, so I have to be home tonight," she explained. It wasn't terrible, unless she had to interact with someone other than an adult of the twins when she got home.

"The Scamanders are staying at your house?" Lana giggled. "How's that going to turn out?"

"Well, I haven't personally talked to Lorcan, but Lysander seems ok with me. He actually congratulated me for beating down Albus during our match against Gryffindor," Lily laughed.

The others laughed too. "Isn't Lysander the one with the longer hair?" Miley asked.

Lily nodded. "Yeah, Lorcan's hair's shorter. It's really the only way to tell them apart just looking at them. But when you talk to them, Lysander is much more relaxed."

"I've only talked to Lysander, so what do you mean by Lorcan not being as relaxed?" Miley asked.

Lily chuckled. "He is much more intense. Like, Quidditch is his life! He has to win! But Lysander isn't really bothered if they don't win. Lorcan will fight back in an argument, and he'll get in your face. I've never seen Lysander yell before," Lily compared.

"Surely you're exaggerating," Shannon insisted.

But Lily shook her head. "No, I can never remember him yelling. He's always so calm."

"Hey, girls!" Raven yelled from across the room. "We gotta pair up soon. Scorp says that dinner will probably start soon. So get over here!"

The girls all started to walk toward them, but Lily looked at Lana in confusion. "What does he mean?" she asked.

Dawning reached Lana's eyes. "Oh! I forgot that this is your first time coming to this. Us older kids pair off, boy-girl. It's the adults' way of keeping the dinner dignified and classy." She rolled her eyes. "So we pair off, and we each go in with each other. It's why some of the older ones bring dates, that way they aren't stuck with one of the really young girls."

Lily looked back at the littler kids playing. "And them?"

"Too young. They'll join when they're older and are a bit more mature. Now they'd just make fun of each other," Lana explained.

"And the older boys won't?" Lily asked skeptically.

Lana smiled with her. "They will, but they will be much quieter about it."

The older kids all came together, and Raven seemed to be the leader. Lily couldn't see Aaron anywhere, and wondered where he had gone.

"Ok, now obviously if you have a date, then that's who you're pairing with. That means, me and Stacy, and Adrian and Scarlet. Ok, the next oldest guy is Dante . . . so how about you and Miley?"

"Miley's Mitch's date," Scorpius said as he shook his head.

"Oh! Right, I forgot. Ok, so Mitch and Miley," Raven amended. "So, Dante and . . . Lana?"

Lana shrugged. "Sounds fine with me."

Raven gave a nod. "Ok. By the way, remember this, guys. Because I won't. Ok, now . . . next is Lars, and you're with Amanda, right?"

Lars nodded. "Yep, that's the plan."

Lana looked toward Lily and whispered in her ear. "Last year he was stuck with Dante's younger sister, and he was really embarrassed since she's a lot younger than him." Both girls bit back a laugh.

"Ok, so next would be Scorpius," Raven listed.

"I call Lily Luna!" Scorpius announced.

Lily felt her cheeks flush a little, but she still rolled her eyes. "Lucky me," she teased. Scorpius only smirked.

Raven was trying not to laugh. "Ok, so we'll all get to see Lucius Malfoy explode. Awesome!" They all laughed at that. "But, anyway. Next is Tanner, and you and Lindsey are going together as you planned. So that brings us to Derek." Raven blew out a breath as he looked at the rest. "Um . . . how about Megan? That cool?"

Derek just gave a grunt and shrug. Megan rolled her eyes, but she nodded. "I guess so."

Raven gave a nod. "Ok. Um . . . I think Xavier is next."

"Me and Shannon," Xavier suggested. Shannon's cheeks turned a deep pink.

"Perfect," Raven told him. "Ok . . . Jace, you and Lola?"

Jace raised a brow and looked over at Lola, who looked disgusted. Lily could already see the disaster happening. "How about I go down with Emily? I don't care if she's a few years younger."

"You sure?" Raven asked.

Jace nodded quickly. "I'm sure. I'd rather light myself on fire than go in with her," he said with a nod toward Lola.

"Really, because I'd rather just die?" Lola mocked.

Raven cut in. "Ok, ok. So that means it's Christian and Lola. Everyone got that?"

There was a chorus of agreement and understanding.

"I'll tell Emily that she's in," Megan told them, and walked toward the younger kids.

Lily looked over at Jace and Lola. "You two are such children."

Jace just stuck out his tongue.

When Pitch had come to tell them that dinner was ready, and they were to head to the dining room, Lily had moved over to Scorpius. Scorpius grinned, and explained the process.

"Ok, so basically, we stop by just a bit away from the dining room. Then Raven and Stacy will interlink arms, and they will walk to the room, and then enter. Then they will take the two seats on the right. Then Adrian and Scarlet go, and they will take the two seats on the left. And it goes on and on," Scorpius explained.

"And what is the point to this?" Lily asked.

Scorpius shrugged. "I have no idea, really. They say it adds a bit of class to the dinner. I think it's just a bunch of old-fashioned Slytherin families trying to act like aristocrats and superiors."

Lily rolled her eyes. "What about the little kids?"

"They are at a separate table across the room. I don't know why they're brought," Scorpius muttered. "They can be a bit annoying."

"When do they join the 'big people'?" Lily joked.

"If the adults think they're mature. Usually when they're old enough to go to Hogwarts. Unless we're uneven on boys and girls, then like with Emily, we invite one to sit at the table with us," he answered.

When they had all reached the bottom floor, they stopped, and Raven and Stacy took the lead. Lily had to admit that they looked very much like aristocrats. Raven's dark hair was slicked back, with a very small fringe on his forehead, contrasting greatly with his pale skin. And his dark blue eyes fit his features very well. He wore dress robes of a silky green color, shouting what House he belonged to. And Stacy was very beautiful. Her long curls were a light blonde, her eyes a pretty green. She was so different from Raven in looks. Her hair and eyes, her small height, and her baby blue dress. But they fit together so well it seemed.

The two locked arms and walked toward the diningroom. As they entered, they could all hear the voices of the adults rise as they caught sight of the two teens. Once Raven and Stacy were out of sight, Adrian and Scarlet started. The procession was slow, but the

others all treated it as an important tradition, so Lily didn't want to mock it. When she and Scorpius were up, she ignored the heat in her cheeks as they interlocked arms. Then they started walking toward the dining room. Lily was a bit nervous as they got closer. Once they reached the doors, the voices rose again, although much louder now that they were in the room. There were compliments and comments, but the one Lily was watching was Lucius Malfoy, just as she knew Scorpius was. His face was angry, furious really. Lily could practically see the disgust in his sneer. Lily couldn't hold back a smug smirk at irritating him. She glanced at Scorpius, and saw that he too looked pleased with himself.

They both took their seats, and watched as the others all came in, pair by pair. Lily and Scorpius tried not to laugh at Derek Bole and Megan Montague. Derek looked annoyed to have Megan on his arm, and Megan just looked disgusted. Lily didn't really understand Megan's annoyance. Lily didn't really talk to Derek, but he never really talked at all to anyone. He was always with the rest of the Slytherins in his year, but he never really talked. Apparently, he sometimes wouldn't even talk to teachers. Lily couldn't imagine being that quiet.

When everyone was there, and the dinner finally started, Lily laughed as Scorpius immediately jumped on Mitch and Miley.

"You two are just so adorable!" he teased. "So sugarcoated. Despite Mitch being an idiot, and you . . . well I'd better be quiet. This is a polite dinner."

Miley just gave him a snide look before it dropped. Mitch just shrugged. "At least I've got a girl. Unlike you," he mocked.

Scorpius shrugged. "Too much of a hassle. Plus it saves me from having to spend money on the useless things a lot of girls in our year want," he retorted.

"You're just not as devilishly handsome as I am," Mitch countered with a laugh.

"Oh, I am the hottest of our year," Scorpius bragged with a laugh as well. "And anyone would agree."

Mitch raised a brow at the challenge. "Is that so? Well, Lola," he called down to her, "who is the hottest guy in Scorp's and I's year?"

Lola looked confused at the question. "Um . . . Scorpius, I guess?"

Mitch snapped his fingers in defeat while Scorpius smiled smugly. "Drat," Mitch muttered.

"You two are such children," Miley said with a roll of her eyes.

Lily, Scorpius, and Mitch looked at her with a look of amusement.

"Coming from the girl dating one of the said 'children'?" Scorpius mocked.

Mitch grinned at her. "Does this mean you'll spoonfeed me?"

Again, Miley rolled her eyes, but Scorpius and Lily did their best to bite back their laughter.

Chapter Ten: A New Year

When the dinner ended, Lily couldn't name a time that she'd had more fun. Although the dinner was meant to be formal, the teens had practically had a party on their end of the table. A food fight had almost broken out among them twice. Of course both incidents were started by Mitch and Jace.

But when the dinner did end, Lily ended up staying a little longer, but soon Scorpius deemed it time to follow her mother's request, and take her home.

"I'm sure she won't care if I come home a little late," Lily insisted as they walked back into the living room.

"Perhaps, but I did tell her that I'd have you home," Scorpius countered. "I would like to be a man of my word. It'll help her like me more." He smirked at her.

Lily rolled her eyes. "You try too hard."

They got to the fireplace, and Scorpius handed her the powder. "Well, I'll see you on the train, Lily Luna."

Lily grinned. "Yeah, I'll see you then, Scorp."

When Lily stepped back into her own house, she was glad that the living room was empty of people.

"I'm back!" Lily called.

"Glad to have you back, princess!" her father called from the other room. "The other kids are upstairs!"

Lily walked up the stairs, and she could easily hear the noise coming from one of the boys' rooms down the hall. But she didn't dare join them, and instead went to her room to change. She was dying to get out of her dress. She changed into one of Teddy's old shirts, and into a comfy pair of shorts. She was thankful for the wardrobe change.

Having nothing else to really do, Lily picked up the book that Scorpius had lent her and laid on her bed. She was almost through

with the book, only two or three chapters left. It was a fabulous book, and Lily had begun to want to try quite a few of the potions in the book.

She had finished another chapter and more when a knock came at her door. "Come in," she called, not taking her eyes off of her book. She heard the door open, and then close.

"You know, you and Rose may not be sisters, but you two have a lot of similarities. Every time I see Rose she has a book in hand, and now you do to." Lily finally looked away to see Lorcan standing in her room. He seemed just like he did when she last saw him. He was skinny, and kinda tall, but last she remembered, he wasn't much taller than she was. He had the same light blue eyes as his twin, but there was one big difference between Lorcan and Lysander. Their hair. They were the same color, obviously, but the style. While Lysander had longer and unruly blonde hair, Lorcan had short hair. The fringe just barely touched the top of his forehead.

Lily couldn't help but smile. "Hey, Lorcan! What are you doing in here? Why aren't you with the others?"

He gave a shrug as he plopped down onto her bed. "I went downstairs and heard that you had come home and were probably hiding up in your room, so I thought I'd come see ya. I haven't talked to ya in forever it seems," he explained.

Lily marked her page and set the book on her bedside table. "Yeah, the first year was a bit hectic. Friends, enemies, getting used to classes, and Quidditch."

"Yeah, the first year is a bit frantic. But they get mellower. And Quidditch makes it all the better," Lorcan said with a grin. Lily wasn't surprised with his excitement. Lorcan was a big Quidditch fan, and loved the game. Anything about it excited him.

"Yeah, because all the classes weren't enough. I had to add practices to my days as well, and kill the idea of sleep all together," Lily teased.

Lorcan just shook his head. "Who cares about classes and homework, and all that junk? If I couldn't play Quidditch, I'd drop as soon as I could."

Lil raised a brow. "You would really quit school?"

"Absolutely. I already know that I wanna play Quidditch when I graduate, so why stay if I'm not going to do anything else with my life?" he asked rhetorically with a smile.

Lily laughed. "You are so weird. I don't think I could play Quidditch for the rest of my life, every day and night."

"I love Quidditch," Lorcan said simply. "I think flying is one of the best things ever, and Quidditch follows a millimeter below it." He let out a sigh. "The rush, the danger, the fun. Quidditch is the greatest game ever."

"You know that sounds a lot like . . . an obsession," Lily hinted.

This time, he raised a brow. "And your point would be?"

Between the next few days Lily spent her time getting herself and things ready for the upcoming school year. Her talk with Lorcan had been fun, and he'd spent another hour or two in her room before they both decided to go to bed. Lily had found that she had actually missed talking to Lorcan. Plus, he was the one person not in Slytherin that would talk to her about Quidditch and not sound sour about her winning streak.

But finally the day came for the Potter children to be taken to King's Cross to start a new school year. Lily had been anticipating this day for a while. She concluded that avoiding cousins and siblings that hate you was simpler in a large castle than in a small house. And not thinking about how they hate you was easier if your thoughts were occupied by lessons and friends.

Lily awoke and let out Regal, letting him fly to Hogwarts on his own. And when the Potter family arrived on platform nine and three-quarters, Lily immediately scanned the crowd for her friends. In the distance, Lily could see a very large family, and she could see Lola amongst them. She could even identify a few of them, now that she had seen some of them in person. And just a meter or so away, she could see Jace and what must have been his parents. His mother seemed to be coddling him, and Jace's face seemed a bit annoyed.

But honestly, they weren't the ones she was looking for. But she couldn't see the blonde heads of the Malfoy family.

"Who are you looking for, princess?" Harry asked as the family walked toward Hugo's family.

Lily looked everywhere but her cousins. "Just a few friends. I've seen a few, but some seem to be missing," she mumbled.

Harry gave her a reassuring grin. "I'm sure they're on their way, hun."

Lily looked up at her dad, and she couldn't help but smile. She really loved her daddy. He was the bravest man she knew, and she never felt safer with anyone than how she did with him.

"Hey, Potters!" Ron greeted. "What's new?"

"It hasn't been that long, Ronald," Hermione said with a roll of her eyes.

Lily slowed her walk and tuned them out. She stayed at the edge of the family group, not wanting to hear her brothers' and cousins' snide remarks. Besides, her eyes still searching for the platinum-blonde hair she was waiting for. The one that she really wanted to see.

"Looking for someone?" she heard a whisper in her ear.

Lily jumped, but turned around to see Scorpius standing behind her. He smirked at her, holding out his arms. Lily laughed and hugged him, surely gaining the attention of her family, even if they weren't addressed.

"Scorpius! It's about time! I thought you weren't going to show," Lily teased.

Scorpius scoffed. "Oh, please! I was here before you were. You just didn't see me."

Lily raised a mocking brow. "Are you sure? That hair is hard to miss?"

Scorpius only smirked as she laughed. "Ha, ha. So tell me, how were the last few days in the lion den?" he said with a laugh of his own. They both knew that they were annoying the Gryffindor teens behind Lily.

Lily shrugged. "Not bad. Surprisingly quiet for me. And the rest of your days?"

"Same. No fights, no arguments, no nothing," he complained, the smirk never leaving.

"Why don't you just get outta here, Malfoy!" James sneered.

"James Sirius Potter!" Ginny scolded. James shut his mouth, but his glare never left.

Scorpius gave a mocking sigh. "If you insist. Shall we, Lily?" he asked, holding out his hand for her trunk.

Lily bit back a laugh, but she couldn't hide her grin. She moved to hug her mother and Ginny kissed her cheek. "Bye, Mum."

"Bye, sweetie. Behave, and make sure to write," Ginny told her daughter.

Lily nodded. "I will." Then she moved to her father. This time when she hugged him, Lily kissed his cheek. "Bye, Daddy."

"Bye, princess. I might be up for a lecture, so hopefully I'll get to see you," Harry told her.

Lily pulled back and smiled. "Bye, guys." She received goodbyes from the adults. The kids only glared and sneered. Lily handed Scorpius her trunk, and they both got onto a train, and Scorpius picked a compartment.

"Here we are," he said as he packed her trunk into the overhead compartment. Lily noticed that there were already things packed up there.

"Who's all been here?" Lily asked as she sat down.

"Me, Lana, Mitch, and Jace. Now we're just waiting for Lola," he said, plopping down onto the seat across from her.

"Last I saw her, she was with her family," Lily told him.

"Yeah, the big ass Pritchard family," he muttered, stretching his legs across the seat. "I'm not sure if one of them starts Hogwarts this year . . . I think there's one that's only a year younger than her."

"I don't know. Family is something me and Lola don't really discuss," Lily said quietly, her eyes closing as she rested her head on the window.

"No surprise. You both have big ass families," he joked.

"Hey, you found Lily Lu!" Lily opened her eyes to see Mitch coming into the compartment with Lana.

Lily grinned. "Hey, Mitch, Lana."

"Hey, Lil," Lana greeted taking that seat next to her. Mitch knocked Scorpius's feet down from the seat, and sat next to him. Scorpius punched his shoulder, and Mitch grinned and hit back.

"Where's Miley?" Scorpius asked. "You know, your owner?" Scorpius let out a laugh, and Lana joined him. Lily only giggled, trying not to fully laugh.

Mitch just waved him off. "With her friends. Like I was gunna sit with them the whole ride! I'd eventually AK myself," he joked. Then he took on a girly voice. "You'll never guess what happened this summer! It was like, so awesome! But I totally missed you! Did you hear about that girl? Merlin, what a whore!" he mocked. This time they all laughed.

"What are we laughing about?" Jace asked. He took the seat next to Mitch. Up close, Lily could see that he looked no different, except for his hair. It had been cut short, which really showed his ears off, which he had in no way grown into.

"About what Mitch's airheaded girlfriend," Lana joked.

Jace laughed. "I'm sure that brings around easy laughs."

"You guys are asses," Mitch muttered with a chuckle of his own.

"Where's dirty at?" Jace asked. He leaned back, resting his head on the back of his seat.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Last time I saw Lola, she was with her family. She'll probably come and find us soon."

"You twoicker like a married couple," Lana said with sarcasm.

Jace gave her a halfhearted glare. "That's disgusting," he muttered.

"What's disgusting?" Lola asked as she came into the compartment. She shut the door once she was in.

"Your face," Jace said childishly.

Lola glared at him. "You know, your face matches your jokes. Dumb."

"Ok, you kids, quit," Mitch told them as he laughed. Lola just glared at Jace as she sat down across from him.

"I think we're in for a long ride," Scorpius joked.

Lily was happy to take the carriages with the rest of the older students this time. She found it much more enjoyable than the boats. She had looked at the carriage oddly at first, confused at the lack of a horse. Until she remembered the stories about the Threstrals that pulled them. Luckily, she'd never seen anyone die, and they were still invisible to her. Jace had been confused as well.

"Why isn't there anything pulling this thing?" Jace asked as they all climbed in.

Mitch gave a shrug. "Who knows? They've always been like that."

Lily tried not to laugh. It seemed that no one else's parents had found it fit to tell them what was really taking them to the castle.

And this year, she got to watch the sorting, instead of actually having to stand around and wait to find what House she would be

placed in. In reality, it was also a big relief. Lily sat with the others, listening to them talk as they all waited for the new first years to be brought in.

"Here they come," Lola whispered as the hall hushed. Professor Longbottom was leading in a long line of tiny first years, each looking scared, sick, or both. Lily couldn't see a confidant one in the bunch.

"There's Rex's little sister," Mitch muttered, pointing to a small girl with brown hair. Her face was practically green, and she looked as if she was going to throw up soon.

They reached the sorting hat, which then began to sing. Lily paid little attention, and clapped when it had finished. Then she half listened as Professor Longbottom explained the sorting to the newcomers. But once he called the first name, Lily's attention was caught.

"Ackerly, Brian."

A gangly boy with pale hair staggered to the stool, and hopped up to take a seat. The hat was placed over his head, falling to the bottom of his nose.

"RAVENCLAW!"

Lily clapped dully as the boy walked toward his new table.

"Adams, Connie."

Connie Adams became a Hufflepuff, and the next two were Gryffindors. It wasn't until Terrence Bletchley put on the hat that Slytherin gained a new member. As the list went on, Lily wasn't surprised at the kids who became Slytherins. Most had older siblings in the House. The only other kid that Lily paid attention to was Miley Jordan, the daughter of her uncle George's friend. Lily wasn't surprised to see her sorted into Gryffindor, just like her parents had been.

"Man, we didn't get any new blood," Dante said once the feast had started.

"Yeah, most of the first years we got are from Slytherin families, except for that Flair kid, but his brother's in our House too," Lars agreed.

"As long as they're not annoying, then I don't care," Mitch said with a shrug.

"Who's leading them around this year?" Lana asked.

"Me and Amanda," Dante replied with a grim look. "A waste of time. I've only been a prefect for a day and I already hate it!"

"You're just being lazy," Lana argued.

"You should be nicer, Dante," Lily mocked. Dante just rolled his eyes at them.

Once the feast was over, Headmaster Brown gave his normal speech of rules and restrictions, and then sent them all off to bed. Dante and Amanda left to go and lead the way for the first years. Lily, Lola, and Jace made their way through the crowd and started for the dungeons.

"Man, classes start tomorrow. I can already feel my spirit being stomped on," Jace mumbled.

Lola gave an irritable sigh. "Let it go, big ears. It won't kill you."

"And if it does?" Jace demanded.

"Then you won't hit me with your big ear every time you turn your head," Lily teased.

Jace rolled his eyes as the two girls laughed. "You two are so funny."

The next morning, Lily received her schedule at breakfast, and she was hating the idea of classes along with Jace. They started off with History of Magic, a terrible way to start the morning. And then they had Charms with the Gryffindors, which would kill all the fun of the class. And sadly, Lily would only have Potions every other day. That, and they had lost their Friday afternoons off. Lily's one bright side

was that she only had one class with Gryffindor, which meant less time of having to see and fight with Hugo.

"Aren't you guys lucky," Scorpius said after Lily had mentioned that bright fact. His mouth was in a grim line. "I've got about four classes with at least a few Gryffindors in them. Sometimes I regret taking Care of Magical Creatures."

After a few days, things fell back into place for Lily. She had fewer run-ins with her family, and when she did they ended with arguments or fights. Slughorn complimented her potion skills, and always took time to talk to her in the halls. She took time to study and do her homework, but mostly goofed off with Jace and Christian Vaisey. Before bed, she was usually seen talking with Scorpius, and sometimes Mitch and Lana. She also sat with them at meals.

Raven held the Slytherin Quidditch tryouts in the middle of September. He only had tryouts for the open Chaser position though, ignoring people's protests. Will Nott, a husky fifth year, was chosen. Lily had to admit that he wasn't bad. He had worked well with Scorpius and Adrian, and made only the occasional bad pass.

"So, guess what," Scorpius said as he and Lily walked toward the locker room after practice.

"Um . . . you've decided that Lucius Malfoy is the nicest person you know?" Lily mocked.

Scorpius gave a chuckle and shook his head. "Nope, try again."

Lily gave a sigh. "Hm . . . I don't know. What?"

Scorpius smirked. "I've got a date for the Hogsmeade visit this weekend."

Lily raised a brow. "Really? With who?" She couldn't remember ever seeing Scorpius show an interest in someone.

"Layla Reeser. She asked me out yesterday, and I figured why not. Mitch is being dragged to Madam Puttifoot's by Miley, and Dante's taking Lana out, so it's not like I had anything to do," he explained.

"Lana is going out with Dante?" Lily asked in surprise.

Scorpius laughed. "Yeah, he asked her out the other day. You missed it, her face was bright red, and she kept stumbling over her answer."

Lily shook her head, but she couldn't help but smile. "You are so mean."

They separated as Lily went to the girls' shower. She was still a bit surprised that Scorpius was going on a date. At the dinner at the Malfoys', Scorpius had said that girls in his year were too much of a hassle for him. When had he changed his mind?

Lily and Scorpius walked back to the castle together, the previous conversation forgotten. "So, would you do Mitch a favor?" Scorpius asked.

Lily raised a brow. "Sure, but why doesn't he ask me?"

"Embarrassed," he said with a shrug. "Just don't tell him I said that."

Lily laughed. "So what is it?"

Scorpius smirked. "Well, he's been playing the guitar for a few years now, but he's not sure if he's any good. So he wants a few people to listen, so he asked me and Lana, but he thinks we'll be a bit biased and too nice. So will you come listen to him with us?"

Lily smiled. "Sure. When?"

"Be in our dorm room straight after dinner tonight. It'll be us guys, and then you and Lana. He's going to play a song that he actually wrote I guess," Scorpius replied as they entered the castle.

"Well, if he can write song, then I'm guessing that he's going to be pretty good," Lily said.

But Scorpius shrugged. "Maybe. But he's skeptical. So just come and listen, and we'll all decide if he's good or not."

So once dinner was done, and all the Slytherins had gone back to their common room, Lily walked up to the fourth year boys' dorm room. As expected, Scorpius, Mitch, and Lana were already up

there. But the other three fourth years were there as well, Rex Derrick, Lars, and Justin Warrington.

"Good, I know Lily Lu won't be too gentle. She's always bluntly honest," Mitch said with a sigh of relief.

Lily rolled her eyes, but took a seat next to Lars. "You better be good," she teased.

Mitch gave her a grin, but it didn't reach his eyes. He really was nervous. "Alright, then. Since we're all here." He picked up a guitar that had been resting behind him on the bed, and then adjusted a piece of paper that was laying next to him. He stared at it once, and then started to play.

Lily was silent in her amazement. She hadn't expected Mitch to suck, be she hadn't expected him to be as excellent! His fingers didn't stumble, notes didn't stutter, and the sounds wove together seamlessly. It was slow, but not at all depressing. In a way, Lily found the song to be uplifting, as if it were a song from the Muggle church in Godric's Hollow. It was . . . beautiful. When the song ended, Lily clapped with the rest of them.

"That was really good, Mitch! What were you worrying about?" Lana asked in awe.

"It was awesome," Rex told him with a grin.

The others gave other approving words while Lily stayed silent. So Mitch soon looked at her. "And what do you say, Lily Lu? What do you think, and don't worry about being blunt and harsh? I can take it," he said dramatically, obviously trying not to grin.

Lily smiled at him. "That was the best I've ever heard someone play."

Mitch made a sound that was a mix of a scoff and a laugh. "Well, then I'm either really good, or you don't listen to much music."

"So is this what you're going to do for a career?" Scorpius asked with a smirk. "You gunna be a rocker?"

Mitch laughed. "Yeah, I think I might even dye my hair blue."

Chapter Eleven: A Snake in the Lions' Den

The days of the second year all seemed to blend together for Lily, with only a few moments standing out. Like how Mitch really did dye his hair an electric blue, making him stand out in a crowd. It was more noticeable than the Weasley hair. But Lily had to admit that somehow, he made that hair color work.

And then there was a game against Gryffindor. It had been very close. Gryffindor had started off and pretty much ended dominating Slytherin. When things looked bleak, Lily started to hunt intently for the Snitch. She had made no show when she saw it, and caught it, much to everyone's shock, for no one had seen her chasing it. The game ended three hundred and sixty to three hundred and forty, with Slytherin barely winning. Raven had been furious, and had increased their practices, and upped how brutal they were.

But otherwise, things were the same. She went to classes, played Quidditch, hung out with her friends, and fought with Gryffindors. Her life was beginning to get dull. But a few days before Christmas break came, things looked a bit brighter. Well . . . she found something to entertain her that is.

Lily had been asked by Professor Slughorn to come and see him after dinner in his office. She took her time eating, but could no longer prolong it. It wasn't that she didn't want to talk him, in fact Professor Slughorn was probably her favorite teacher. It was just that Lily knew he would ramble if given the chance and time. But if she came in later, she wouldn't be able to stay there long before curfew. Lily had reached the floor where Slughorn's office was when she found them.

"So, we've got only one last Hogsmeade visit before Christmas break." Lily stopped walking. That was Albus's voice. Lily looked around the corner to see him talking to . . . a girl! She was about his height, maybe a little shorter, with light blonde hair and dark eyes. Lily knew who she was. She knew her name was Emma, but couldn't remember her last name. But Lily was positive that she was a Ravenclaw.

"Yeah, but I am excited for Christmas. Some of my cousins are coming to our house for this one. It'll be the first time I'll have seen them in a long time," Emma said with a happy smile.

"You don't see them often?" Albus said with a furrowed brow, an interested look in his eyes.

"No, they go to Beauxbatons. I really like seeing them," Emma replied. "I love my family."

Albus smiled. "As do I. They're the most important people to me."

Lily bit back a loud laugh. What a lie! He was the most important person in his life! In fact, he hated his sister! But this was something Lily just had to take advantage of.

Lily stepped out from behind the corner, but the two flirting teens didn't notice her. "Oh! Al, I've been looking for you everywhere!" Lily exclaimed.

Both fourth years looked at her, Albus trying to hold back an angry look, and failing. "Yes?" he asked, his teeth clenched.

Lily stepped so that she was just in front of them. "Well, perhaps you could come with me, and we can talk?"

Just like Lily expected, Albus didn't move. "Just tell me, Lily. I see no reason why we can't talk in front of Emma."

Lily smiled. She knew what he was trying to do. In his mind, she could do or say nothing bad in front of Emma without him seeming like an innocent victim. At least, that's what he thought.

"Well, I just got a letter from Mum. She said that she would send your potion for that um . . . problem you've got, ya know?" Lily said, mumbling a bit at the end, trying to appear meek.

Emma looked at Albus curiously. Albus himself looked horrified and furious. "What problem, Al?"

Lily bit her lip, hoping that she didn't seem like she was going to laugh. "Well, I should be going. Professor Slughorn needs to speak with me. Bye, big bro. Bye, Emma."

"Goodbye, Lily," Emma said with a sincere smile.

Lily knew Albus wasn't going to speak, so she skipped off, not laughing until she'd turned the corner. Even though she probably should have felt bad, Lily didn't. Emma seemed like a very nice girl, someone Albus needed around him. But Albus wasn't someone that Emma needed around her.

When Lily came to the door to Slughorn's door, she gave a knock before opening it. She'd been called to his classroom too many times, and no longer felt the need to be 'allowed' in. She was too . . . familiar with him.

It seemed that Professor Slughorn felt the same way, for he didn't look at all upset at her quick entrance. "Ah, Miss Potter! I'm glad to see you!" He was sitting on a couch, papers around him. To Lily, it seemed like papers that he was grading.

Lily smiled at him. "Right back at ya, Professor. So, what did you need me for?" She moved about the room, not yet taking a seat.

"Well, I've been thinking about your excellent potions work. You have very high marks. In fact, you are probably the best student I've had, and I've had many. You probably beat your father . . . even your grandmother for whom you were named after," Slughorn told her. "So, I wanted to give you something."

Lily finally moved over toward him, and took a seat on the couch opposite of him. He handed her a book. The cover was nice, excluding a few burn marks. But once Lily opened it, she saw that it was old. Very old. Words were written in it, paragraphs crossed out. A potions book.

"What is this, Professor?" Lily asked.

Slughorn smiled. "Well, one day, your father confessed to me how he did so well in potions his sixth year. He said it was thanks to this book, which an excellent potions master had owned. He had written better instructions in it, making the potions even more potent. He told me where it was, so I went searching for it to see if I could find it. And I did. I never knew what to do with it, but I've been thinking that you might like it."

Lily looked at the book in wonder. Her father had owned this book at a time, and before him a master at potions had owned it, and written notes? But who . . . "Who was the other owner of the book?"

"His name was Severus Snape."

Now Lily looked at it in awe. Severus Snape. Her father had said that he had known no braver man. In fact, her father had given her brother his name! This was his book? "Thank you, Professor. Thank you so much!"

Professor Slughorn looked proud. "I knew you would like it. Sometimes, you're more excited about potions than your grandmother Lily. She was an excellent student."

Lily glanced up at him. He often mentioned her grandmother. Lily wondered what she was like at times. He always compared her to her grandmother, so perhaps they were alike? And like herself, her grandmother was apart of the Slug Club.

"Professor Slughorn," Lily addressed.

"Yes?" he asked.

"Well . . . my father once mentioned that you had a wall dedicated to your favorite students and members of the Slug Club. I was wondering if I could see it," Lily asked.

Slughorn smiled. "Of course. It's just behind you."

Lily turned her head, and saw a wall with shelves, and a table pressed against it. It was covered with pictures. Lily put down the book and went over to it. Some of these people she even knew, while some were a mystery. She saw her father, Hermione, Ron. She almost laughed. She remembered how her uncle Ron had often complained about how long it took for Professor Slughorn to remember his name. Her mother was there, and Gwenog Jones. But she couldn't find who she was looking for. Until she had thought that she was looking at a mirror. She knew that she had found Lily Evans.

Lily picked up the moderate sized picture frame. She was young, and very pretty. She could see why her grandfather had loved her. She had long, flowing red hair, but it was a darker shade than the

Weasley color. She had green almond-shaped eyes, just like her father and brother. Fair skin, and Lily guessed that she wasn't very tall, but not very short. She was smiling at the camera, her eyes gleaming. And every now and then, she would seem to laugh. It was as if she knew a funny joke, but one that Lily wouldn't understand. Like a secret. This was the woman that saved her father's life. The one that she had been named after. This was the woman that she was constantly compared too. Lily suddenly felt inadequate. She would never be that pretty, she would never compare to the wonderful things that Lily Evans had done.

But Lily loved this picture.

"I think she looks a lot like you," Slughorn commented.

Lily jumped. She hadn't heard him come up behind her. "Oh! Um . . . I don't think so, sir. She's much too pretty."

"You have her eyes," he commented.

"My eyes are brown."

Slughorn laughed. "I mean the shape. You have almond-shaped eyes. And even though you're a Weasley, you don't have many freckles, and the ones you have are hardly noticeable. And that smile. It's the exact same."

"I look more like my mother," Lily told him, glancing at the picture of her mother.

"I disagree. I think that you are a wonderful blend of Lily Evans and Ginny Weasley," Slughorn told her. "You're both headstrong, intelligent, brave, and very loyal."

Lily snorted. "I'm not that loyal. I've practically turned my back on my brothers and cousins. That's not loyalty."

"They weren't exactly loyal to you," he reminded.

Lily kept looking at the picture. She loved it, and she found it hard to stop looking at the picture of the beautiful young girl.

"Would you like a picture?" Slughorn asked suddenly.

Lily looked back at him quickly. "Really?" She carefully set down the picture frame.

Slughorn smiled, and moved over to a closet. He started rummaging through a box. "Of course. I have dozens of pictures of my favorite students, the members of the Slug Club. Every year I put one a different one, one that I find to be my favorite. I'd be glad to give you one." He pulled out a picture, and handed it to her.

Lily grabbed it carefully, not wanting to tear it with her eager hands. This picture was different. It was taken during the spring, out by the Black Lake. She looked much more relaxed. Her tie was loosened, jumper off, and she had kicked off her shoes. She looked a bit older as well. Her hair was longer, her skin a little more tan. And once again, she was smiling, and would give a laugh. And her eyes, they seemed to be laughing as well.

"She's a bit older in that picture. That was during her seventh year, some time in May. Her friend, Alice took the picture, and was kind enough to give it to me," Slughorn told her.

Lily looked up happily. "Thank you, Professor!"

Slughorn chuckled. "It's no problem at all, Miss Potter. Anything for my favorite and best student." Then he seemed to notice the time. "Well, I should be letting you go. Your curfew is almost up. Once you're older and your curfew gets longer, perhaps we can have some prolonged talks."

Lily smiled, and picked up the book. She placed the picture between two pages. Then she looked back at Slughorn. "Well, thank you again, and good night, Professor."

"Good night, Miss Potter," he said politely.

When Lily got back to the common room, it was practically empty, excluding a few older students who seemed to be cramming information into their brains. Fifth and seventh years probably. So Lily moved to take a seat on the empty couch across from the fireplace, and she delved into the book.

"Shouldn't you be in bed?"

Lily looked behind the couch to see Scorpius coming toward her. He was in loose pants and a thin shirt.

"Shouldn't you?" she quipped.

He gave a smirk. "I'm hungry, so I'm going to go off to the kitchen. What's your excuse?"

"Reading a book that Slughorn gave me," she replied.

He gave a small hum. "Well, would you like to join me for a late snack?"

Lily closed the book, the picture acting as her bookmark. "Sure, why not."

The two left the common room quietly, and walked in silence toward the kitchens. Lily's thoughts were whirling around her new book and picture. Severus Snape, the man her father called the bravest man he knew. Lily had never seen a picture of him, but she remembered stories.

Flashback

"Severus Snape was the bravest man I knew," Harry had told his tiny daughter. She was laying in bed, her father trying to get her to go to sleep with a story. "But I didn't really like him as a teacher. He was mean sometimes."

"Why was he mean?" Lily had asked, her childish eyes wide with wonder.

"Well, he was in love with a beautiful girl a long time ago, and he never stopped loving her," Harry started, moving to lay beside his daughter. "But, this girl was in love with someone else, and it was someone he hated."

"You mean Grandpa James?" Lily asked, remembering vague stories about him.

"Yep. So, he and Grandma Lily stopped being friends. But he still loved her. Even after she got married, even after she had a child,

and even after she died. His love never stopped," Harry finished with a whisper.

Lily smiled at the romantic, yet sad story. Her daddy's life had been so full of adventure, so eventful. It had everything!

"How come he never visits?" Lily mumbled through a large yawn.

Her father had given her a smile that seemed a little sad. "He can't. So all we can do is remember him."

End of Flashback

Lily hadn't understood at that time that Severus Snape was dead, and even after that story, she'd pretty much forgotten about it the next morning.

"Deep thoughts?" Scorpius asked suddenly.

Lily was happy that she didn't jump. He really had startled her. Then she realized that they were at the portrait that hid the kitchens. "What?" she whispered as they stepped inside.

"You seemed very spaced out," Scorpius said with a shrug.

The house elves swarmed around them, and they each said what they wanted. The house elves had it made in a minute, and the two sat down to eat.

"I was just thinking about that book," Lily told him, remembering what he'd said just a moment ago.

"Is it any good?" he asked, taking a bite of the piece of cake on his plate.

Lily couldn't help but smile. "Yeah, it's really good."

"Could I borrow it when you've finished it?" he asked, a brow raised in question.

"Sure, doesn't bother me," Lily told him. She took a drink of water. "So, how are you and Layla?"

Scorpius smirked. "Done."

Lily raised a brow this time. The two had been seeing since their first date two months ago, and Lily had never seen them fight. "What happened?" she inquired.

Scorpius gave a shrug. "She was annoying. Clingy, whining, and flaky. Not to mention an airhead. It was hard to keep up a conversation with her."

Lily tried not to laugh. "Well, I'm sorry it didn't work out."

"I'm not," Scorpius said with a chuckle.

Now Lily laughed. "So, how did Layla take it?"

"She threw a big hissy fit, and now she refuses to talk to me." Scorpius rolled his eyes. "Our whole relationship, she never shuts up. Now that we're done, she's quiet. Just my luck."

Days kept going, and Lily soon found herself back at home for Christmas break. She also found herself to be very bored. And she knew only one way to bring about some excitement.

"Daddy," Lily said as she stepped into his study.

Harry looked up from his desk with a smile. "What is it, princess?"

"Well, I was wondering if Scorpius could come over for a day or two this week? You know, since he invited me over during the summer?" Lily pleaded.

She watched as her father slightly tensed. Lily knew he was hesitant about her friendship with Scorpius, but he never argued about it. Mainly because Lily always talked about him when her mother was with them, and her mother liked him. But this was the first time Lily had come to her father alone with something about Scorpius. She wanted to know what he thought without her mum giving him a stern gaze.

"Oh, well . . . have you talked to your mother?" Harry asked, clearing his throat.

"No, I thought I should come to you first," Lily told him.

"Why not Lola?" Harry questioned, a bit of pleading look in his own eyes.

Lily almost laughed. "I invited her last year. Besides, I thought it would be nice for you to meet Scorpius. And he's never been to a house that had Muggle things in it. He's curious."

Harry sighed. "You know that your brothers are going to kick up a fuss when they find out?"

Lily almost squealed. "They always have a problem with something. So, can he?" she asked again, even though she already knew his answer.

He sighed again. "I guess. Just give me a heads up a day early."

Lily smiled brightly. "Well, he might be here tomorrow."

Harry shook his head and gazed at her with fondness in his eyes. "Thanks for the warning, sweetheart."

Lily raced out his study, and up to her room. She started to write a quick letter. She and Scorpius had been discussing having him over for a few days through letters. They both were bored, and they knew it would be fun to hang out, especially when they knew it would irritate her brothers. What better way to entertain them?

The next morning, Lily sat at the breakfast table, waiting for the mail. But then her father dropped the news.

"Oh, Ginny, I forgot to mention, I told Lily that she could have Scorpius over for a few days," Harry stated.

"What?" James and Albus exclaimed angrily.

Ginny ignored her two furious sons. "I think that's a fine idea. He's such a nice boy."

"He's an arse!" James argued.

"James Sirius Potter!" Ginny scolded. "You will be nice while he's here, young man!"

James glared balefully at his sister.

An owl came with the mail, and Harry handed Lily a letter as he unfolded the paper. Lily quickly read the letter.

"Dear Lily Lu,

I'm glad that I can come over. What fun we will have! Ha, ha. I just can't wait to see your brothers. I've told my parents that I'll be staying at your house for a day or so, and they don't mind. So, I'll probably Floo over to your house this afternoon, or tomorrow, depending if you get this before you go to sleep, although I doubt that. Sorry if that was confusing. Either way, I'll see you on the 20th.

Sincerely,

Scorpius"

Lily bit back a few giggles. When she refolded the letter, she noticed her father looking at her questioningly. "Scorpius will be here this afternoon."

Harry gave a nod, but said nothing else. The boys, not allowed to say anything, glared. Ginny smiled. "Good to know. I'll have to make a bigger lunch."

"Oh, Mum," Albus said quickly, "Rose is coming over later. She's going to help me clean my room."

"You can't do that alone yet, Albus?" Ginny said with an exasperated look.

Albus shrugged. "There's a lot to clean."

"You should clean it more often. Like, more than once every two years," Harry teased.

Albus rolled his eyes. "Yeah, yeah."

"Are you working today, James?" Ginny asked.

James nodded, but didn't look too happy. "Yeah, it's gunna be rough. I'm working with Cecilia today, and she talks too much."

Both adults laughed. "Why isn't Fred working with you today?" Harry asked.

Lily was curious when both boys looked a little annoyed. "He's mad at me," James replied. "But he'll get over it."

"What happened?" Ginny asked worriedly.

James waved it off. "Nothing, just a tiff. Like I said, he'll get over it."

"I'm sure you two will get past it," Harry told him. "You've been best friends for too long."

James looked like he wanted to say something else, but he kept his mouth shut.

Later, after James had gone to work, and Albus had disappeared to his room to clean with Rose, Lily was waiting in the living room. She was waiting for Scorpius to show up. He finally did, not even tripping. Lily envied his graceful steps. She always tripped or at least stumbled.

"Why hello, Lily Lu," Scorpius greeted with a smile.

Lily smiled too. "Welcome to the Potter house. And be ready. James has left, but Rose has joined us."

Scorpius chuckled. "What fun!" He placed a bag down next to the couch. Then he moved over to the tv. "So, this is a . . . televisible?"

It took all of Lily's restraint to not laugh. "A television. It uses electricity, and it lets us watch Muggle shows and sports," Lily explained. "Do you know what shows are?"

Scorpius nodded as he examined the tv. "Yeah, I remember that from Muggle Studies. They don't really make sense to me, but I know what they are."

Lily grinned. "Would you like to watch one?"

Scorpius raised a brow. "Can we?"

Lily pointed to the couch. "Sit down. I'll give you a better lesson than Professor Fleet can."

For the next few hours, Lily and Scorpius watched tv shows, cartoons, and a few sports. Watching sports led Lily to having to explain the rules to Scorpius, who kept calling fouls for things that didn't exist in the Muggle world.

"You can't hit someone for the ball in soccer," Lily said with a roll of her eyes.

"That's stupid!" Scorpius exclaimed. "First, you can't use your hands, and then you can't hit someone? What good are hands then?"

Lily laughed. "It's a good thing you don't play Muggle sports, then."

Scorpius just waved her comments off as he leaned back. "Alright, so I've seen a 'tv', what else is there?"

"Grab your bag. I'll show you my room. There are a few other Muggle things in there I can show you," Lily told him.

Scorpius did as she asked, and followed her up the stairs. And they were lucky enough to reach the second floor just as Albus and Rose were leaving Albus's room. Both faces twisted into disgust when they saw them. Lily and Scorpius just stared on innocently.

"Go get a shovel, Rose. I see a snake we should cut in half," Albus mocked.

Scorpius just smiled politely. "Why hello, Al. May I call you that? After all, we'll be in the same house for a few days."

Lily tried not to laugh as she saw the anger swirl in her brother's eyes. "Well, Scorp, we should continue. Albus's face here looks like it might explode, and I don't want to dirty my shirt." Ignoring the two's sour looks, Lily led Scorpius to the door that led to her room. She let him in, and smiled at her brother and cousin before closing the door. Scorpius was looking around.

"For being a girl, you have an awesome room . . . except for one thing," he said with a grin.

Lily raised a brow as she sat on her bed. "And what would that be?"

"I don't see a Slytherin banner, or even a poster," he said with mock offense.

Lily grinned. "Well, you're right. I'll have to fix that."

Scorpius held up a hand. "No worries. I know just how to get one."

Lily fell back to stare at her ceiling. "How is that?"

"Lana. Her dad's got a few that graduating kids have left in the dorms. That's how I got mine," he replied. He plopped down on the bed next to her, jolting her entire body.

Lily laughed. "Moocher."

"Your point?" he quipped. He gave a sigh. "So, where am I sleeping?"

"You are getting the most comfortable bed ever! We call it a couch," Lily joked.

Scorpius laughed. "That is awesome! Just the place I wanted to sleep!"

Lily smiled and turned to look at him. "I'll make sure that my brothers cause no trouble."

"And I'll pray that I live through the night," he teased. Lily giggled and stared back up at her ceiling. "So, is this the book Slughorn gave you?" Lily glanced over to the Severus Snape's book in his hands.

"Yeah, that's the one," she told him.

He hummed for a moment as he thumbed through it. "Who's this?"

Lily sat up to see that he had her picture of her grandmother in his hands. "That's my grandma. The one that died."

Scorpius hummed shortly again. "You look a lot like her. Around the eyes and such."

"You're not the first person to tell me that," Lily murmured.

"How many other people told you that?" he asked.

"Only one other," she said with a small laugh. "Slughorn gave me that as well. He said he has a lot of pictures of his favorite past students and Slug Club members, so he gave it to me."

Lily watched as Scorpius stared at the picture, seeming to want to speak. Finally he looked at her. "Can I see where your grandparents are buried?"

Lily raised a brow. "Why would you want to see that?"

His cheeks turned pink. "Well, don't laugh, but I've never seen a graveyard beyond the creepy one in my own backyard."

Lily laughed. "Um, sure. I'll show you. Come on."

They both stood up, and left Lily's room. They both went to the front door, and began to slip on their shoes and coats.

"Mum, Scorpius and I are going to take a walk!" Lily called.

"Be back before dark," her mother called back.

"Kay," Lily yelled. Then she looked at Scorpius. "Well, shall we?"

Scorpius smirked and nodded. "Lead the way."

They walked outside, and Lily immediately started toward the cemetery. As they walked, Scorpius asked about the village, so Lily told him about living in Godric's Hollow. Festivities, past, and the Muggles that lived there. And as they went, she explained certain Muggle things, like cars and Christmas lights, and how they are put up without magic.

"That sounds like a lot of work," Scorpius muttered after her explanation. Lily just shook her head. He really hadn't seen many Muggle things.

"Hello, Lily!"

Lily looked to see an elderly woman waving at her as she was stepping into her home. She smiled and waved back. "Hello, Mrs. Dempsey! Having a nice holiday?"

"I know I'm having a cold one," the woman said with a laugh. "Come over sometime this week, I haven't seen you for over a year it seems."

Lily gave a laugh. "I will. Goodbye, Mrs. Dempsey."

"Happy Christmas, Lily!" And with that, the woman closed her front door.

Scorpius instantly looked at Lily. "Who was that?"

Lily smiled as they started to walk again. "Mrs. Dempsey, an elderly woman that adored my parents when they were young and first moved here. Now she adores us kids. When my parents' work schedules get hectic, she offers to watch us. She's really nice."

"She a Muggle?" Scorpius asked.

Lily nodded. "Yeah. So, she's how I really know a lot about Muggles. Her, my father, my aunt Hermione, and my grandfather all contribute to my knowledge of Muggles."

"Remind me to meet your grandfather sometime then," Scorpius said with a smile.

They came to the cemetery, and Lily led him past the gate. "Here is where we bury the dearly departed. Ignotus Peverell is buried here, as is Godric Gryffindor, and the Dumbledore family," she told him. Then she led them over to where her father had taken her once on Halloween. "And here is where James and Lily Potter are buried."

Scorpius looked down at the joint grave. He moved forward to brush away a bit of snow. "It's bare," he noted.

"My father usually waits until Christmas to put flowers here again. He said that on Christmas during the war was the first time he'd come here. So he does it every year," Lily explained.

Scorpius walked away, and Lily watched him. She watched as he went over to a rose bush, and carefully plucked off a rose. He started to walk back to her. "I'm surprised these still grow," he commented.

"Magic. There's a lot of it in this village, even if the Muggles don't ever notice it," Lily replied. "They just make up their own reasons for the odd things around here."

Scorpius gave a nod as he placed the flower before the grave. He smiled when he looked back at her. "Just so they know that it's not just their son thinking about them this Christmas."

Lily smiled softly, and she went and carefully picked a rose of her own. Then she came back, and kneeled down in front of the grave. She placed the rose next to Scorpius's. "Happy Christmas, Grandma and Grandpa," Lily whispered, looking at the grave.

Scorpius kneeled down next to her. "Happy Christmas, Mr. and Mrs. Potter."

Chapter Twelve: Win, or Die Trying

When Lily and Scorpius finally found their way back to the Potter house, Lily could hear that James was home. And she could also hear that he wasn't alone.

"It seems we've been joined by a few more lions," Lily murmured to Scorpius.

Scorpius smirked. "This should be an interesting evening then." Then he took a sniff of the air. "What's that smell?"

Lily took in a breath. Instantly, she could smell her mother's cooking. A mouth-watering smell. "My mum is making dinner."

"Well, shall we venture into the kitchen? You can show me any Muggle devices in there?" Scorpius suggested.

Lily grinned. "Why not." She took his wrist and led him to the kitchen. Sure enough, her mother was directing the kitchen with a few wand movements. She smiled when she saw them.

"It's about time you two got back. Dinner will be done soon," Ginny told them.

Scorpius gave a smile. "Hello, Mrs. Potter. Having a nice day so far?"

Ginny smiled at his manners. "It's been pretty good. And yours?"

His smile turned into a smirk once again. "It's been fun. I've been drilling your daughter for any and every bit of information about Muggle things."

Lily rolled her eyes. "Yes, any little thing."

Ginny chuckled. "Well considering how often she hangs around her grandfather, Lily would be the perfect one to ask about Muggles."

Scorpius looked at her with a raised brow. Lily just shrugged. "What can I say? He's one of the greatest guys alive."

"I hope you're talking about me." Lily turned to see her father come into the kitchen.

Lily smiled. "Of course, Daddy."

Harry smiled. "How's your day been, princess?" he asked, kissing the top of her head.

"Fine," she answered simply. Then her father moved and kissed her mother. That never bothered Lily . . . until it got to be a bit much. "Hey, people are in the room," she groaned.

Harry looked back at her, and Ginny just laughed as she continued with dinner. "Ha, ha." Then he seemed to notice Scorpius. "So, this must be Scorpius, the young man staying with us. It's nice to meet you."

Scorpius gave him a nod. "Right back at ya, Mr. P. How was work?"

Harry took a seat at the table as well. "Same as always. Full of paperwork." There was a loud bang from up above, and then loud laughs. "Who all is here?"

"James brought home a few friends. And Tyler came over too," Ginny listed.

Scorpius looked toward Lily. "Tyler Creevey?"

Lily nodded. "Al's best friend. He comes over every so often."

"Your house always full of kids?" Scorpius asked with a laugh.

Lily grinned. "Pretty much. You should come to my grandparents' house during holidays. There's barely enough room to breathe."

He smirked. "Well then, perhaps I should see that sometime."

"So, who did James bring over?" Harry asked.

"Kyle and Eric. They met up at George's," Ginny explained.

Lily tried not to grimace. Kyle Matlock and Eric Kirke were friends of James that Lily didn't really like when she and James got along.

Tyler Creevey was ok, but they never spoke. Tyler was a faithful friend, so if Albus was on bad terms with someone, Tyler stayed away from them. And that included Lily.

There was a loud 'CRACK', and Kreacher was standing next to Ginny. "Does Mistress need Kreacher's help?"

Ginny smiled down at the house elf. "Could you tell the boys upstairs that dinner will be ready in a minute?"

"Of course," Kreacher croaked. With another 'CRACK', Kreacher was gone.

There was a clear hostility in the air at dinner. Five Gryffindor boys, two Slytherins, and two parents. That meant the boys could say no hateful remarks, but it didn't stop the occasional glare that was sent at Lily and Scorpius. But what seemed to anger James and Albus the most was how Scorpius didn't react, but continued to talk to their parents.

"So, is it just the Aurors that are under your order, or do you also control the Hit Wizards?" Scorpius asked Harry.

"I talk with their commander from time to time, but no, I have no real control over them. But we never really clash, we usually get along," Harry explained.

"Well I can't see them wanting to go against The-Boy-Who-Lived's suggestions," Scorpius joked.

Harry chuckled around his bite of food. "Well, you have a point." He cleared his throat. "So, Scorpius, do you have any ideas of what you want to do after school?"

Scorpius gave a nod. "Well, I've actually thought about being an Auror or Hit Wizard," he told him.

Harry raised a surprised brow. "Really? Why is that?"

Scorpius gave a shrug. "It just seems like a very interesting line of work to me. I doubt I'd have a stale life in that line of work."

Harry chuckled. "No. Life is never stale when you're an Auror."

After dinner, Lily and Scorpius practically camped out in the living room. They sat around, talking, playing Exploding Snap, and listening to music. And then Scorpius convinced Lily to play chess.

"I hate this game," Lily muttered as one of Scorpius's bishops smashed one of her knights to pieces.

Scorpius smirked. "You know, when you said you sucked, I didn't really imagine how badly you sucked at this," he teased.

Lily made a face, and stuck her tongue out childishly. "Bite me."

Scorpius jokingly snapped his teeth at her, and then crushed her last knight. "So, I'm guessing that you don't play often," he mentioned.

"I used to actually. Hugo and I used to always play. It's his favorite game, and he's a brilliant player. But . . ." Lily trailed off. "Well, I've never been good at it."

"My father taught me how to play," Scorpius told her. "So he and I play together every now and then. And he plays the game with Lucius a lot too."

"Wow. You were serious when you said you had Malfoy staying at your house." Both Lily and Scorpius turned their heads to see James, Kyle, Eric, and Albus walking into the living room. Already uninterested, Lily and Scorpius went back to their game.

"Yeah, it sure stinks up the house," Albus sneered.

"So, Lily Lu, Mitch says he needs help with something, and since you know Muggles, I referred him to you," Scorpius mentioned.

Lily raised a brow. "Really? What does he need help with?"

"He wants to pierce his ear."

Lily almost laughed. "What? He wants to pierce his ear?"

Scorpius smirked. "Yeah, he wants to look like a 'rocker' so he wants to get a piercing. He just doesn't know where to go."

Lily gave a shrug. "Well, I guess I could find a place for him to go."

"Thanks. He'll appreciate it," Scorpius told her.

"Hey guys, do you hear that? It sounds like a hissing snake," Eric murmured mockingly.

"Mitch told me and Lars that we should dye our hair blue as well," Scorpius told Lily with a laugh.

Lily laughed too. "I don't think blue matches you very well," she teased.

Scorpius ran a hand through his hair. "Really? I was thinking green though, though maybe not all of my hair."

Lily rolled her eyes. "Always the rebel," she mocked. From the corner of her eyes, Lily could see that the other boys were getting frustrated at not getting a response out of the Slytherins. She tried not to grin and laugh at them.

The boys tried to bother them for another twenty minutes before finding it useless. Lily and Scorpius had laughed once they were out of the room. Nothing was funnier than the angry and disappointed faces of four Gryffindors.

And surprisingly, they did nothing to Scorpius during the night. It made Lily assume that her mother had given them a mean look and stern command. Her brothers could try to be as cool as they wanted, but they were all afraid of their mother.

Scorpius had left that afternoon after receiving a note from his father. Scorpius had rolled his eyes, and almost scoffed.

"My grandfather wants to have a day of just us Malfoy men," he'd muttered. "Which basically means that he just doesn't want me here."

Lily bit back a laugh, but when he did leave, she found herself bored again.

When Christmas Eve came around, Lily was a little happier to go to the Burrow. But when she learned that Louis and his family had yet

to arrive, Lily made a beeline for her grandpa's shed. She wasn't at all surprised to find him working on the bike.

"Hello, flower," Arthur greeted with a smile. "Here to help?"

Lily smiled. "You bet." Immediately, she went to work. "So, how have you been, Grandpa?"

"Pretty good, Lily Flower." He looked at her carefully. "Well, can I tell you something a bit . . . shocking?"

Lily looked at him in surprise. "What is it?"

He gave a small sigh. "Well, I'm thinking about retiring in a few years."

Lily dropped the tool she was holding. "What?"

He gave a soft smile when he looked at her. "I'm getting older, flower. And it won't be this year. But eventually, I'll have to."

"You're not that old," Lily muttered. "Remember how long Dumbledore lived? And he worked until his death."

Arthur just patted her hair. Lily didn't care about the black smudges on his hands. "Dumbledore never dealt with seven kids, and grandchildren from five of them. I've been through two wars, the death of a son, and many more. I think that in a few years, I'm just going to choose to spend the rest of my life relaxing."

Lily picked the tool back up and stared at it for a moment. Then she looked back up and gave her grandfather a small smile. "If you're sure, Grandpa."

He gave a chuckle. "I'm sure. But I think we can get this bike done before that."

Lily smiled as they both started to work with it again. Once they heard Molly calling them in for dinner, Arthur was getting rid of the grease and oil on their skin and clothes.

"So, what are you going to do with this bike when we're done?" Lily asked.

"Well, I'll give it back to your father, though I doubt he'll use it much." Arthur eyed Lily with a smile. "I'm sure I could convince him that he's got a young girl in his house that would love to have it."

Lily's face lit up in excitement. "Really? You think he'd let me have it?"

Arthur gave a shrug. "I'm sure he could be persuaded. Out you three kids, you'd probably be the best one to give it to."

Lily couldn't stop smiling for the rest of the night.

Soon, they were all back at school, and Lily's days began to blur. And soon came the day of the Slytherin game against Ravenclaw. Raven had pretty much punished them during practices, and Lily had stumbled up to her dorm room to fall onto her bed and sleep every night.

When the day finally came, Raven had them all eat a good breakfast, but then forced them all to the pitch early. Soon they were dressed and ready for the game, and people were just arriving to the pitch.

"What was the need for getting here early?" Dante demanded grumpily.

"Yeah, I mean, you've been busting our asses for the past three weeks!" Will Nott groaned, falling back onto the bench.

Raven's brow furrowed. "The next person that whines can run the laps at the next practice!" he growled. They all became quiet at the threat. The smallest amount of laps they ever did was fifty around the pitch. "And I wanted you all in here to give a speech." Raven pulled in a deep breath. "Now, we almost got whooped by Gryffindor in our last match, and if it wasn't for Lily Lu, we would have lost and been smoked out of the running for the Cup. I don't want that happening again! We can't afford that! We need to dominate Ravenclaw today! They're ahead of us on overall points! And I'm not Aaron, so I won't rely on Potter to help with the big lead! I kept you guys on the team, and I brought you in, Will, so you all damn well better play good!" Raven yelled furiously.

The team was quiet, silenced by his angry words. Raven scanned them all carefully, and then he seemed to calm. "Alright, now that all of that's off my chest, let's get down to business. Now, their new Chaser is Hayden Stretton. He's a good player, but he's not near as good as Angel Goldstein was. And now that little Davies is their new captain, and he's made a few changes. He's put more focus on their defense, so the Scamander twins have been pretty ruthless as of late. And they've been targeting Seekers." Raven looked at Lily. "So you need to be very careful, and you have to watch for Bludgers."

Lily nodded. "Got it, Rave."

"Now, from what I hear, Tad Davies hasn't really improved much on being a Keeper, and since we smoked them last year, I think we can do the same if we get past their Beaters and Chasers. Any questions?"

"So most of the game is on us Chasers?" Scorpius asked mockingly.

Raven gave a small nod. "Like I said, I'm not relying completely on Lu here," he said, patting Lily on the shoulder.

"Alright, well you said that the Scamanders have been targeting Seekers," Adrian recapped, "so shouldn't we have one of our Beaters keeping close to her?"

Raven gave another nod. "Yes, valid point." Raven's brow furrowed in thought. "Well . . . Lars, you stay by Lily. My aim is better, and aim isn't important in beating away a Bludger. So keep close."

"If you say so," Lars muttered.

Raven gave a smirk. "Alright. If you've all got it straight, then grab your brooms, and let's get out there and kill a few Ravenclaws!"

There were cheers of agreement among the team as they all grabbed their brooms and headed toward the pitch.

The game was going in Slytherin's favor this time. After an hour, the score was three hundred and ten to two hundred and forty with Slytherin in the lead. Lily hadn't seen the Snitch since Madam Hooch had held it in her hand, no matter how hard she looked for it. The Chasers had stepped up their game, and Lars was always

within reach to bat Bludgers away from Lily. One seemed to fly toward her every five or so minutes.

And Lily was worried. Mark Kimball was the Ravenclaw Seeker, and he was much bigger than Lily was. Sure, size and strength never really mattered when you were a Seeker, but Lily didn't doubt that he couldn't knock her off her broom.

"Any sight of it yet, Lily Lu?" Lars asked as he came to knock away another Bludger.

"Not yet," Lily mumbled. Lars gave a small groan as he flew a little away. She took a moment to listen to the game below.

"Malfoy brings the Quaffle up the middle," Meredith commented. "He passes it off to Flint, who throws it over Stretton's head. Malfoy throws it back, like it's a child's game. But now Flint throws it to Nott. Nott shoots and . . . he scores! Another ten points for Slytherin."

Suddenly, Lars was flying toward her. Lily looked over and saw a Bludger hurdling toward her. Lily froze, but Lars made it, and knocked it away.

"That was quicker than usual," Lars said with a few pants.

"Move, Lu!" Raven yelled.

Lily barely had time to look at Raven in confusion before something slammed against her upper back and right shoulder, throwing her forward and off of her broom. Lars reached out his hand, but he didn't catch her. Lily heard the gasps and cries, she heard her name being called, but everything seemed so slow as she fell. The sky slowly got farther away, the Bludger moved slowly above her, and the Snitch slowly moved across her line of sight. With clumsy hands, Lily lifted her left hand, and made a grab for it. She felt the feel of the cool metal before it slipped away from her. Then it was gone, and she landed with a painful thud that made her ears ring.

Lily knew the game was still going, but she couldn't get up. She couldn't even feel the right side of her back and shoulder. She heard her name muffled by the ringing in her ears, but then Professors Longbottom and Slughorn were above her.

"Are you ok?" she barely heard Professor Longbottom speak, and had to watch his lips for help.

Lily could only blink, and give a small nod. The biggest lie she'd ever told. Soon there was a hand curling around her left arm, and she was being helped as she tried to sit up. Then something touched her right side, and Lily gave out a pained cry. A fire seared through her veins.

"I think her right side has taken most of the damage," she heard someone speak.

"We'll have to get her to the Hospital Wing," someone else said.

Lily's eyes snapped open wide, and everything seemed to quicken up again. But the pain was still there, and the ringing didn't stop.

"I'm fine!" Lily told them quickly as she tried to get up. She did her best to put no weight on her right side, and she didn't use her right arm at all.

"Lily, you're hurt. You have to go to the Hospital Wing! You can't keep playing!" someone, Professor Longbottom perhaps, argued. But Lily ignored him, and picked up her broom. And before she could be stopped, she was in the air.

"And it seems Potter is back in the game after her terrible fall," Meredith announced.

Lily went back above the players, noticing the concerned glances she got from her teammates. She ignored them, and went back to looking for the Snitch. But this time, she kept her gaze low. Her entire body was aching, and her right was burning with an agonizing pain. She had to end this game quickly. She was their only Seeker, so she had to stay in the game.

"Are you alright, Lil?" Lars asked worriedly as he came over, keeping right next to her now.

Lily gave a small nod. Her ears were still ringing, her head was spinning, and the pain was making her eyesight blurry. She couldn't put too much focus on what he was saying. And out of the corner of her eye, Lily saw a glint of gold. Near the grass in the middle of the

pitch. Lily started her dive, but it seemed that Kimball had also noticed it.

"And the race for the Snitch begins!" Meredith said with hushed excitement as the crowd began to chant for the Seekers.

Kimball looked at Lily with a glare in his eyes. "You're losing this one, Potter," he hissed. Then he smashed into her right side.

Lily bit her lip roughly, keeping back the pained cry she wanted to let out. She then tasted the metallic tang of blood on her tongue. It dripped down her chin. But she couldn't feel that small pain against the much larger pain in her back and shoulder. The next time he tried to hit her, Lily dodged it, moving him to her left side. Something she could handle.

They were getting closer to the ground, and the Snitch evaded them. They both pulled up, their feet skidding across the ground. They flew above the grass, both of their hands outstretched for the Snitch. It swerved to the right, and out of Kimball's reach. Lily put down her left hand, and shakily reached out with her right. It screamed in protest, but Lily felt a small relief as she once again felt that cool metal in her hand as her fingers closed around the Snitch. And at that moment, Kimball proved Lily right, and rocked her off of her broom.

Cheers sounded, a whistle blew, and Lily tumbled to the ground, rolling across the grass. Her entire body seemed to lite on fire when she stopped, her face in the grass. Lily closed her eyes. She had lost all will to try to beat away the ringing, and to keep her strength. Instead she went limp, her body deadweight. She felt the footsteps coming toward her this time. There were small brushes against her body, but it was enough to make her skin burn.

"Lily, don't move. This is going to hurt," someone said in her ear. It was surprisingly loud against the ringing.

Air whooshed under her, bringing a sting to her skin as she was levitated up in the air. Then she was gently brought down on what Lily assumed was a stretcher. And then it was gliding along. Lily hadn't opened her eyes, but she could feel the tiny wind scrapping across her.

Now it seemed that time was speeding up for her, because soon she was in the castle, and she was painfully moved to what felt like a bed. Slowly, Lily went in and out of focus, until finally, she was out.

When Lily awoke, the Hospital Wing was dimly lit. Her body was still stinging, but it didn't make her want to cry. Her throat and lips were dry. She ran her tongue over her lips, and found that where she had bitten herself too hard had been healed.

"I was starting to think that you wouldn't be waking up until tomorrow, Miss Potter."

Lily slowly turned her head to see the headmaster, Professor Brown, in the seat next to her bed. "Professor? What are you doing here?"

Professor Brown smiled at her. "Why, I thought I'd come see how Slytherin's star athlete was doing," he said. "You know, I don't think I've ever seen a student take a fall like that and get up and continue playing the game."

Lily smirked. "Yeah, I'm pretty crazy."

"I was going to say stubborn," he said with a laugh.

Lily sighed. "So, is that all you came here for?"

"Well, Miss Potter, one day, I decided that I wanted to be the type of headmaster that students could talk to. One that got along with his students. I didn't want to be just another headmaster that handed out punishments and sent students on their way," he told her. "But you see . . . I don't see you very often."

Lily raised a brow. "Isn't good that I'm never sent to your office?"

He grinned. "In a way, yes. But that means that I hardly know you. So, I thought this was a great time to do so, without rumors spreading about you being in trouble. I figured this way I could learn more than I know about you, which isn't at all much."

She looked at him curiously. "If we never talk, then how do you know much of anything about me?"

"Well, I've talked to your teachers, I've seen your games, and lesson grades. Plus, I've often talked to Professor Slughorn, who talks about you quite a bit," he told her. "But I find myself wanting to know more."

Lily brought in a breath as she closed her eyes for a moment. She was wondering if there was an ulterior motive. No teacher had wanted to know things about her, besides Slughorn. And that was because he thought she had a bright future that could benefit him. So could Professor Brown really want to know her just to know her?

She opened her eyes. "Well, the first thing to learn about me is that I hate formalities, so just call me Lily."

Professor Brown gave a small hum. "Well, then I'll make you a deal. If you promise to not do it in front of other students, I'll allow you to drop the formalities with me."

Lily tried to hide her surprise. A professor, a headmaster, would let her call him by his name? "As long as I only do it in private?"

He nodded. "Then I won't mind."

Lily smiled. "Thanks." Then after a quick thought, she threw out a question. "What is your first name?"

"It's Jacob. Jacob Brown," he told her.

Lily tried not to laugh. "Can I call you 'Jake'?"

Professor Brown did laugh. "I suppose so. Whatever makes you comfortable. May I ask you a question, Lily?"

Lily gave a small shrug, ignoring the tiny prick of pain she felt. "Shoot."

His brow scrunched as he thought. Then he looked back at her. "What do you think you want to do after school?"

Lily raised a brow at the odd question. It wasn't something that most second years were asked. "Um . . . I'm not really sure. I don't even know what classes I'm going to add next year."

Professor Brown grinned. "Well, if I could make a suggestion, I would suggest taking Care of Magical Creatures. It's quite a fun class, no matter what you're going into."

Lily smiled. "Yeah, I thought I might take that class anyways. Despite that fact that he's the gamekeeper, I hardly see or talk to Hagrid. I figure if I take his class, I'll get to see him more." She looked at him slyly. "So, do I get to ask you a question now?"

She didn't get a quick response, but finally he nodded. "Of course. Let's be fair."

Lily thought for a moment. "So . . . what House were you in?"

"I was a Hufflepuff," he told her. "Something I was very proud of."

Lily almost laughed. "Hence the fairness bit. Did you play Quidditch?"

"No, I'm a fan, but not a player. I was a Slug Club member, a Chess Club member, and a member of the Charms Club. I was more academic than I was athletic. Hmm . . . what is your favorite thing about being a Slytherin?" he asked.

Lily hesitated. She hadn't expected such a deep and personal question. Not this quick. Professor Brown seemed to sense her hesitation. "I know it's a loaded question, but if you can, would you please answer?"

"Why this question?" Lily demanded softly.

"I told you I want to know you. I want to know how to handle you, what to do and what not to do. So I try to get answers that will help me figure a person out. And I think I've found the question," he said quietly.

Lily still didn't answer right away. "Well, . . . before I start Hogwarts, I dreamed about coming to this school and being a Gryffindor. Just like every other Potter. It was like I was . . . stuck and drawn into it. But, now that I'm a Slytherin . . . I guess that I've got a chance to be different. To be . . . Lily, not Lily Potter," she murmured, trailing off near the end.

Professor Brown stared at her with an open gaze, before he finally clicked his tongue and spoke. "Well, Lily, I think that Slytherin is the perfect House for you. Because, I think that out of any Potter to walk through these halls, you will be the one we all remember. And not because you are a Potter. But because you are you."

Lily felt her cheeks blush at his words. She doubted his words, because she knew that she wasn't important. Perhaps the Gryffindors would remember her as another filthy Slytherin, but everyone else would remember her because she was Potter. It was a reality that she accepted, yet hated with a passion.

"That's very kind of," Lily murmured, "but I'm not that lucky."

Professor Brown smiled. "Says the girl who has made friends in a House that distrusted you before you were even sorted."

Chapter Thirteen: Tensions Rising

The day after the game, Lily awoke to find a mountain of treats and gifts on the table next to her bed.

"They're from admirers, classmates, the team, and your friends," Madam Pomfrey had told her. So Lily spent the morning eating Chocolate Frogs, pastries, and many different kinds of candy.

But then Madam Pomfrey gave her the bad news. "Well, I still have a few things to mend, and some of the potions take time to kick in, so I think I'll have you stay here for at least one more night."

Lily groaned with dismay. It was a Monday, so the others couldn't visit her. Not while they were in class. But she did finally get a visitor a few hours before lunch. Raven Bole came into the room.

Lily raised a brow at his appearance. "Shouldn't you be in class, captain?" she taunted with a smile.

He smirked. "I have a free period, so I thought I should come and see my Seeker. Now that she's on the disabled list," Raven told her. He took the seat next to her bed. "When are you being let outta here?"

"Tomorrow at the least," she told him. "Pomfrey still has things to fix. I'm pretty broken up."

Raven's smirk turned into a grin. "I'm not surprised. But I was proud that you got up and kept playing after that fall. I thought we were done for when you fell."

Lily gave a small shrug. "You've gotta be tougher than the game."

"That's what I like to hear!" Raven said with a laugh. "The rest of the team is coming over around dinner, but I wanted to show you this first." He pulled a folded piece of paper from his robe. "I just got a copy from Madam Hooch."

Lily took the paper and looked at it. It was a score sheet of the Quidditch teams. Gryffindor had three hundred and forty, Ravenclaw seven hundred and thirty, Hufflepuff two hundred and fifty, and . . .

"We're in the lead!" Lily squealed in delight. Slytherin had eight hundred and eighty points!

Raven gave a smile too. "Now, let's not get too excited. There are still three matches left in the season, and the points can change easily. But I thought you'd be happy to know that your injuries weren't for nothing."

"Oh, Mr. Bole, please tell me that you aren't in here for another injury." Both Slytherins looked to see Madam Pomfrey coming toward them.

Raven gave a grin. "Nah, I'm just here to visit."

"Well I'm sure your next class will be starting soon, so you two might want to finish up," she told them.

Raven gave an uninterested nod. He stood up, walking backwards. "Sure. I'll see you around dinner, Lu. Oh, and be ready, because Lars feels really guilty about not hitting that Bludger that took ya out."

Lily shook her head and laughed.

Lily's next visitors were Lola and Jace, who came during lunch.

"You are crazy!" Lola told her once they saw that she was awake.

Lily smiled. "It's nice to see you too, Lola."

Lola gave a small smile as well. "Are you ok? Are you still hurt or . . .?"

"I'm a little sore still, but that should be gone around tomorrow, I guess," Lily explained.

Jace grinned. "That's good. Classes have been pretty boring this morning. But I guess it was worth it. That was an awesome game."

Lola smacked his arm. "That was not worth it! She could have been really hurt!" she protested. "That was a really big fall!"

Jace just rolled his eyes. "You just don't understand the sport, and the intense feel for the game."

"No, I'm not an idiot! I like being sensible, and if I fall more than fifty feet from the ground, and break almost every bone in one side, then I don't get up and risk doing it again!" Lola argued.

Jace glared. "Give her credit for being strong and committed! She did it for our team and our House!"

"There's a difference between commitment and stupidity!" Lola yelled back. "Not that you would be able to tell the difference. You've been living in stupidity all your life!"

"Well at least I . . ."

"Knock it off!" Lily intervened. She had to stop 'em now, because she knew that Jace was probably ready to cross the line completely. "Look, I was stupid and committed. I walked the line, so if neither of you two can agree to that, then agree to disagree, and shut up!"

Both Lola and Jace looked cross at each other, but they each gave a small nod. Jace moved and grabbed a Chocolate Frog, and Lola looked toward Lily.

"So, when are they letting you out? I imagine that you're pretty bored in here," Lola teased.

Lily sighed. "Oh, you know me too well."

"Don't blame you," Jace said through a mouthful of chocolate. "I'd die in here if they stuck me here for over a day."

"It's very boring, but I've had some visitors. The headmaster came in, Raven came in earlier, and I guess the team is coming around dinner," Lily listed.

"Well, then at least it won't be quiet," Jace laughed.

Lily smiled. "So, what's going on out in the big world of Hogwarts?" Now Jace and Lola looked hesitant. Lily raised a brow. "What is it?"

Lola bit her lip, so Jace spoke. "Well, the Gryffindors are all talking about how you won't be able to play for the next game. And Tad Davies is bragging about how his team knocked down the 'invincible Potter'," he explained,

Lily rolled her eyes. She wasn't surprised, especially with Davies. He was an egotistical big-mouth. Everyone knew that. "How's that going for him?"

Jace grinned. "Well, be ready to see him, cause at breakfast the team was talking about jumping him later tonight."

Lily just shook her head. "Morons," she muttered. Then she sighed. "Well, Tad Davies doesn't matter any. I could care less what he thinks."

"Are you sure it's just him?" Lola asked. "Because some of his team was agreeing with him."

"But not all," Lily told her. She pointed to a big box of Crystallized Pineapple. "That's from Lysander and Lorcan. It's their usual way of apologizing."

"I'm surprised you haven't torn into that yet," Jace teased.

Lily chuckled. "I'm saving the best for last."

Jace laughed and nodded, taking another Chocolate Frog.

After Jace and Lola left, it seemed like forever before dinner finally came around. The team trudged in, all in their practice robes.

"Hard day?" Lily teased.

Scorpius gave a smirk as he plopped down into one of the chairs next to her bed. "You could say that. How ya doing, Lily Luna?" he asked.

"I'm so bored I considered dying," she mocked.

"I'm really sorry, Lil," Lars said guiltily. "I didn't even see that other Bludger coming at ya."

Lily waved him off. "It's fine. We still won."

"That we did," Adrian said with a grin. "And now we are in the lead!"

"But we have to be careful not to get too cocky," Raven warned. "I don't want to end up like Gryffindor last year. I wanna take home both the Quidditch and House Cups this year again."

Will Nott grinned and waved it off. "Come on, it's in the bag! We rocked Ravenclaw's world! Plus, we've got the other teams scared."

Lily raised a brow. "Scared?"

Raven pulled up a seat as well. "Yeah, little Davies has been talking a big game, but truth is, all of the other teams are shaking in their robes."

Dante grinned. "Yeah, everyone's been whispering about 'the unstoppable Potter', and how nothing can take her down. They all think that since you took a Bludger to the back and fell from like more than fifty feet and kept playing, nothing can stop you," he told her with a laugh.

"Yeah, the Hufflepuff Seeker is apparently petrified to go up against you in our match together. And that's all the way in May!" Scorpius said with a laugh.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Well, what happened to Rickett last time we went against each other, I'm not surprised. I'm sure my supposed 'invincibility' doesn't help her worries any."

Scorpius sighed as he slightly tipped his chair back. "So, how are you feeling, Lily Lu?"

"Fine. I really just wanna get the hell outta here," she muttered.

"Just one more night, Lu" Raven assured. "You'll be out of here tomorrow. I'm going to demand it."

Lily laughed. "Yeah, I hope I'm awake to see Madam Pomfrey throw you around when you say that to her."

Lucky for Lily's sanity, she was let out the next morning. She received a small bottle of a potion, and was instructed to take it every meal. It was supposed to curb the stinging feeling that she was constantly feeling. There were whispers that floated around her, about her injuries, how she was crazy, and such. Lily ignored him and kept her head high. She went through her classes, made sure she was caught up, and went about her day. She continued with the team practices, although she had to take frequent breaks. Thankfully, the boys were patient with her.

"It's not your fault, red," Dante told her. "You were hurt, so you're allowed to take a few breaks to catch your breath."

But Lily hated it. She hated not being able to play to her full extent, and she prayed that she'd be good as new before their next game. Especially once she'd run into James again.

Over a few days, Lily had noticed James strutting around more than usual, and with more arrogance than usual. She tried to pay no attention to it, but she couldn't stop her mind from growing curious as to why there was now a difference. She wasn't going to ask, but she found out a few days after the match between Gryffindor and Hufflepuff.

Lily was walking with Lola and Jace out of Transfiguration, when that stinging pain suddenly racked through Lily's body, causing her to drop her things and hiss loudly in pain. Lola moved to Lily's side, and Jace began to grab her things.

"Are you ok?" Lola whispered.

Lily tried to nod, but her pained face didn't make it very convincing.

"Having trouble, kid?"

Lily looked up to see James standing a few feet from her. His friends were with him, and his arm around some snobby-looking girl. Lily scanned the others, and was surprised to see Fred was missing.

She collected herself and glared at her brother. "What do you want, Potter?" she sneered. She didn't want to fight right now. She was hurting, and all James would do was brag about his recent match

win. Gryffindor had beat Hufflepuff, four hundred to two hundred and sixty points.

James held up his free arm in mock defense. "Wow, chill, kid," he said patronizingly. "Just asking how Slytherin's handicap is doing."

Lily kept her glare, and gritted her teeth as the pain racked through her again. "You know, Jamie, your head's looking a little bigger. More air finding its way in there?"

James surprisingly didn't get mad. Instead, he just smirked. "Wow, you didn't mature at all, did you?"

Lily rolled her eyes. "Coming from the boy that's picking on his little sister because he has no life?"

The older Gryffindors laughed. "I don't have a life?" James said amused. "You know, you're telling this to a future pro Quidditch player, right? Everyone knows it, even the teachers."

Lily gave him a sneering grin. "You do remember that you lost to my team, right? You lost last year to your little sister's team, and you lost the Cup to them as well," she taunted.

James glared now. "I have never lost to you. Al lost to you."

Lily kept her grin. "He's your teammate. What kind of leader are you if you can't whip him into shape? And what are scouts going to think of you if they see your team lose to Slytherin's?"

Now James was slowly becoming furious. His fists were clenching and unclenching, and Lily watched as his face slowly became red. "Watch yourself, snake!" he hissed.

Lily kept a mocking face. "Oh, are you gunna hit me? Is big bad Jamie gunna hit a girl? What? Can't think of anything to say? No witty comeback? You can't win an argument against a second year? Really?"

James took a step forward, but was interrupted.

"Back away from my player, Potter!"

Everyone looked to see Raven walking toward the scene with two others. A deadly look was on his face. Lily grinned at James. James was big, but Raven was much bigger. He wouldn't win a physical fight against him.

James gave a snide look at Raven, refusing to back down. But his friends seem much less sure about themselves now. The girl placed her hand on James's chest. "Come on, James. Let's just go." But James didn't budge.

Raven finally reached the group. The two that were accompanying him were Bret Reeser and Mark Dimitrov, two other seventh years. "Potter, I'd hate to have to throw you out of a window, but if you don't back away from my Seeker, I'll have to."

"Is that a challenge?" James snarled.

"Let's just go, James. We'll go calm you down," the girl insisted.

Raven gave a short laugh. "Yeah, Jamie-boy. Go, so she blow your tiny dick, and then you can tell her she's not a whore for doing it," he mocked.

Lily sighed in disgust. Even though she didn't like James, that was not something she wanted to hear about her brother. It was still disgusting.

The girl gasped, her face hurt and offended. James's cheeks turned even more red in his anger. "Is that what you and that slut Stacy West do?" he barked back.

Every Slytherin in sight tensed, waiting for an explosion. Raven's face turned dangerous. He reached out and grabbed the collar to James's jumper. His friends tried to intervene, but Mark and Bret kept them back.

Raven glared hard at James. "If you ever say anything like that about Stacy again, I promise that I will drown you in the lake." He dropped James, and with his legs unsteady, he fell to the floor. "And there's no need to be jealous just because I have a dick big enough for a girl to blow, unlike some little boys on the floor."

James glared up at Raven as he started to get up, but Raven pushed him back down, and then turned his gaze toward the three second years. "Come on, you three. Let's go to lunch."

Days following that fight, Lily noticed that the animosity between Gryffindor and Slytherin had increased tenfold. And the hatred between her and her Gryffindor brothers and cousins had gone up. Well, excluding Dominique, but she hardly ever counted.

"They're glaring at you again," Lola muttered to Lily at breakfast one morning. Lily glanced up from her plate to see James and Albus glaring at her from across the room. But she was used to it now. They did that at least once a day.

"Just ignore them," Lily told her.

Mail came a few minutes later, and a large and dark owl swooped down in front of Lily, neatly avoiding her plate. Lily recognized Victoire's owl immediately. She noticed that there were quite a few letters held in his beak, and the top one had her name on it. Lily held out her hand, and the owl dropped the top one into her palm, and then flew off toward the Gryffindor table. Lily read the letter.

"Dear, Lily,

Hey, how are you doing? I heard about your accident during your Quidditch match. I hope you're ok. Well, I know you and I don't write each other very often, so this letter is probably a bit surprising, but Teddy is being lazy and doesn't want to do this. Anyway, we're writing you to ask if you could please come home for Easter break? We need you and the others to all come back. I can't really say why, so just please do. You'll learn why at the Easter dinner at grandma and grandpa's. Write me back and tell me how you're doing. I really want to hear about how your second year's been.

Love,

Victoire"

Lily raised a curious brow at the question of the letter, but just put the paper back into the envelope, and continued to eat.

"Who's owl was that?" Jace asked.

"My cousin, Victoire's. She wants me and the others to come home for Easter break," Lily told them.

"Are you going to?" Lola asked.

Lily gave a small nod. "Yeah. Vic's the nicest one in the family, so it's really hard to say no when she asks you to do something. Especially when it's really simple like this."

"What do you think she wants you home for?" Lola asked.

Lily just shrugged. "I have no idea. It's hard to guess."

Jace gave a laugh. "Well, she's living with Teddy right? Maybe she's knocked up."

Lola rolled her eyes and smacked his shoulder. Lily gave a laugh though. "I'm sure it's not that."

"And why is that?" Jace challenged teasingly.

Lily smiled. "Because she's abstinent."

Lily found herself dreading the train ride back home for Easter. Not many kids went back for Easter, because they'd rather finish the overload of homework they seemed to get. So Lily feared a run-in with her brothers or cousins. That was what lead her to waiting outside the headmaster's office.

She had asked Professor Slughorn for the password, and then had raced to the gargoyle blocking her way. Once she'd made her way up the stairs, she knocked firmly on his door.

"Just a moment," Professor Brown's voice boomed out to her. So Lily waited, and waited . . . and waited. She began to tap her foot impatiently, when the door finally opened, and Professor Creevey walked out.

He gave her a grin. "Go on in, Miss Potter."

Lily smiled. "Thanks," she mumbled, and then walked into Professor Brown's office. He was sitting behind his desk, as if waiting for her.

When the door shut behind her, Lily finally spoke. "How's your day been, Jacob?" It was odd to call a teacher by his first name, but Lily actually like it more.

Professor Brown smiled. "It's not too bad so far, Lily. So, what can I do for you?"

Lily laughed as she sat down. "Well, I was wondering if I could just Floo home for Easter break. I really don't want to ride the train. I fear boredom."

"I think you fear your family," he countered.

"That too," Lily said casually, avoiding any other kind of expression than the one she had on, which was practically blank.

He gave a small sound, which was a mix of a chuckle and a scoff. Then he cleared his throat. "Well, I suppose we could arrange that. May I ask what you kids are all going home for?" he asked.

"Victoire and Teddy wants us to come back. They have some big announcement," she told him.

He gave a nod. "Yes, Ted Lupin and Victoire Weasley. Well, I'm assuming that it's still Weasley."

Lily nodded this time. "Yeah, it's still Weasley. But they do live together."

"Miss Weasley still abstinent?" he asked bluntly.

Lily raised a brow, wondering how he knew about that. "Yeah, she is."

He gave a hum. "I remember her always cautioning her friends while she was in school. A sweet girl though. Never brash or . . . forceful, I guess you could say."

Lily laughed. "I know what you meant."

Professor Brown looked at her. "Are you abstinent?"

Lily felt her cheeks heat up. "I'm twelve, Jacob."

He laughed. "No, no. I mean, do you also believe in that?"

Lily momentarily bit her lip. "Um . . . well, I guess I'm not sure."

"You're not sure."

Lily felt her cheeks get even hotter. "Well, right now, I don't really have an opinion on it. I mean, when I'm older I probably will. But for now . . . I guess that I don't really care about it enough," she explained.

Professor Brown stared at her with a curious gaze for a while. Then he grinned. "I'm sure that your father would love to hear that."

Chapter Fourteen: The Good, Bad, or Shocking News?

Lily sent a quick letter to her parents, telling them that she would be Flooing home instead of taking the train back. Not wanting to get a letter asking why, Lily sent it a day before she would be leaving. She packed a small bag of things to take home the night before, and then made her way down to the common room. She found Lola, Jace, and Christian sitting at a table. Lola was revising an essay, while Jace and Christian were playing chess. Lily took the other seat at the table.

"Who's winning?" she asked.

"Tie," Jace said quickly.

"Christian," Lola corrected. "He's been dominating the game since the beginning."

Jace threw a small glare over at Lola. "So I'm not the best chess player. At least I'm putting up a fight."

Lily laughed. "Don't worry, Jace. I can't even put up a fight when I play."

Jace smiled and gave a small bow of his head. "Thank you, Lil. At least someone knows my pain."

"So, Lily, you're leaving tomorrow, right?" Christian asked, after moving a knight.

"Tomorrow morning," Lily replied. "I've got a bag packed already. What are you three doing?"

"Staying here, avoiding homework, breaking rules," Jace listed.

"So, the usual?" Lily mocked with a laugh.

Christian laughed as well. "Basically."

Lola rolled her eyes. "Well, I planned on actually doing the homework we got. That way I'm not rushing through it the morning it's due."

"Either way, you'll probably fail History of Magic," Jace taunted lightly.

"Not as bad as you," Lola retorted, her tone just as light. But Lily could see the tension in Lola's skin.

Lily gave Christian an apologetic look. "I'm sorry that I'm leaving you here with them."

Christian laughed. "Yeah, you owe me."

It was quiet when Lily stepped out of the fireplace and into her home. There wasn't even a sound from the kitchen. She set her bag down, and then began to move through the house. Her mother wasn't in her study working, and her father wasn't in his.

She made her way back to the living room. "Kreacher," she called.

There was the normal 'CRACK', and then Kreacher was right beside her. "Yes, Mistress Lily?"

Lily tried not to roll her eyes at the title. "Where are Mum and Dad?"

"Your father has a quick meeting with the minister, and your mother is at your aunt's house. They weren't expecting you home so early," Kreacher explained.

"Oh." Lily gave a sigh, and moved to sit on the couch. "Ok then. When are they supposed to be back?"

"Kreacher does not know," he told her. "Is Mistress hungry?"

Lily gave only a shrug. "Just a little."

"Then Kreacher will make you something," he said. Then with a snap of his fingers, he was gone. Lily pulled out the music player that Jace had gotten her last year, and also a book. After finding a good song, Lily settled on the couch and began to read. Kreacher came back and set down a sandwich and drink, so Lily began to eat as well. She was comfortable, and at ease. But she knew not to get used to it. Eventually her brothers would be home as well, and all of this would disappear.

After what could have been forever to Lily, or just a few seconds, she heard the front door open and close. Footsteps followed, along with a loud sigh. Lily almost giggled. It was her father, and that sigh usually meant that he'd had a hard day, or too long of a meeting. When he walked into the living room, Lily watched as his eyes went wide as he caught sight of her.

"Lily! You're home?" it came out as a question, making her laugh.

Lily got up and hugged her father. "I came early. I forgot to tell you and Mum what time I'd be getting here."

Harry smiled as he broke the hug. "Well I'm happy either way. It's great to have you home."

Lily smiled too. "Yeah. So, do you know why we were all asked to come home?"

Now he was grinning, as if holding a secret. "Yes, I do. But I'm not allowed to say anything. Victoire would scratch my eyes out, and over the years, I've learned to fear Weasley women."

Lily rolled her eyes. She turned off the music, and closed the book.

"Have you eaten yet, Lily?" Harry asked.

"A little, but I'm still kind of hungry. Why?" she asked.

Harry smiled at his daughter. "Well, would you like to go get an ice cream with me?"

Lily's smile got brighter. "Sure!"

Even though old Florean Fortescue was dead, Harry still took his children there. It had been placed under a new owner, and to Harry, the place didn't really seem to change. It was still cheerful, still bright, and still made the best ice-cream.

As the two made their way through Diagon Alley, Lily noticed the stares again. She and her family never went anywhere public without being stared at. The price of being Harry Potter, or his family. But Lily was surprised that her father seemed to easily ignore the stares. But perhaps after being stared at for years and years, you

maybe got used to it. He was calm and relaxed as he ordered two sundaes, and chose an outside table for them to sit at. Lily delved into her sundae. She loved Florean Fortescue's ice-cream, but it was rare for her father to take only her, and not her brothers too.

"So, Lily, how are you enjoying your second year?" Harry asked, trying not to laugh at how she was getting chocolate smeared on her lips and chin.

Lily grinned. "It's fun. I think we have a chance to win the Cup again this year."

Harry gave an impressed nod. "I'm happy to hear that. How are you after your fall?" Lily knew he wasn't exactly worried. After all, he had told them about all the falls and injuries he'd taken while he played at school, so he was sure they knew the risks.

"I'm a lot better. I don't even feel any pain in my side or shoulder anymore," she told him.

"Your last game is against . . . Hufflepuff, right?" he asked, taking a very big bite of his own sundae.

Lily nodded. "Yeah, we plan on dominating them. We killed them last year, and their game against Ravenclaw they ended up losing by like two hundred points."

"Not their greatest year, huh?" he asked with a smile.

"I think they have a bad captain," Lily told him.

"Who's their captain?" Harry asked.

"Paxton Smith, a pompous git," she muttered.

Harry laughed. He took another bite, and waited until his daughter seemed relaxed. "So, why did you Floo home? Not like the long train rides?"

Lily looked up at her father, but then cast her eyes down at her ice-cream. She wasn't sure if she should admit to not wanting to be around her brothers and cousins, or just deny it. "It is long," she

agreed. "There's just less trouble this way." Lily prayed that he would drop the topic.

"You know, princess," Harry said, "when I was younger, I always compared Dudley to having a sibling. And I knew that if that was what it was like, I never wanted one. But, when I met your uncle Ron, and I met his family, I saw what being a sibling was always about."

Lily knew this was his way of bringing up the dislike between her and her brothers, but she couldn't help but be curious of what her father thought. After all, he was one person that she thought had some of the best insights.

"What do you think it's about?" Lily asked, finally relenting.

"It's about being there for them, protecting them, and caring for them. Each siblings' way of being there, protecting, and caring for each other may be different, but their love for each other will be the same. And they will fight, and those fights can last a short time, or a long time. But then the day will come that the fight's beginning will be forgotten, as will the entire fight. And the siblings will go back to being there, protecting, and caring for each other," he stated, seeming to stare off into a distant memory.

Lily was quiet at his words, taking them all in. Was that really the truth? Were Albus and James trying their best to take care of her? Was she really doing her best? And would their fight end? Would they really one day forget it? Would they get past it?

"How can you be sure?" Lily asked quietly.

"I have two examples," Harry told her. "One, the fighting. When Percy left, all of the others were furious with him. A few even thought that they hated him. But when the war started, their fight seemed so small and unimportant. And they welcomed him right back in.

"Second, being different. When it came to your mother, Ron was very protective of her. Whether it was me or someone else, he never liked the idea of her dating. It was his way of making sure she didn't get hurt. But Fred and George were a little more relaxed. They were concerned, and they cared, but they also knew that she was strong, and that your mother could easily take care of herself."

Lily thought about that too. In her case, she was the one abandoning the family. So . . . would they really take her back in? Would their fight seem small in the future? And when James and Albus had approached her when she was sorted, had she let herself get too worked up? Perhaps, but they still hated Slytherins and that was her House now too. And she wasn't the one that had turned Hugo against her. She had done her best to apologize to him, but he still hated Slytherins. He hated things that were part of her. Then there was Rose. Lily knew that she had blown up on Rose, but Rose was expecting things to just be ok. Rose didn't want to have to be around her Slytherin friends. So, if it wasn't just her fault, how did she end the fight? Could she?

Even though Lily knew that she could probably apologize first, she knew she wouldn't. She was a Potter, and she had gained the stubbornness and pride. And she was a Slytherin. And since she hadn't started it, why should she apologize first?

"What do you think siblings are about?" Harry asked her suddenly.

Lily looked at him, actually feeling a little ashamed for her inability to just try and stop the fight. "I don't really know, Daddy. I guess I haven't figured that out yet."

Harry reached over and ruffled her hair. "And I don't expect you to figure it out for a while yet, princess."

When the two Potters had finally finished their sundaes, Harry Apparated them to Godric's Hollow's park, and they began to walk. But when they approached the walkway to their house, Lily was confused as her father kept walking.

"Where are we going?" Lily asked as she jogged to catch up to him.

"To Ron and Hermione's," Harry told her. "I'm sure your mother will be happy to know that you're home earlier than expected."

"Why is Mum over there?" Lily asked.

Harry raised a brow. "Perhaps to visit her brother, and her best friend and sister-in-law?" He chuckled. "With you kids gone, life is pretty quiet for us adults."

Lily nodded, showing she understood. "So, what was your meeting with the minister about?" she asked.

"Well, we were talking about the security of Azkaban. We've been keeping quite a few Aurors there for patrol, but we need a few more out on the field as of late, so we need to figure out how to keep security of the prison up," he explained vaguely.

"Why do you need more on the field?" Lily asked, curiosity in her voice.

He gave a half-grin. "We aren't getting as many recruits as we need lately is all," he told her. "People are thinking that the training is too tough. And I guess it is, but it's nothing impossible."

"How did you get through it?" Lily asked as they walked toward the front door of her aunt and uncle's house.

"Lily, I was doing things an Auror does when I was your age," he joked. Lily smiled as her father knocked on the door, announcing their presence, before he opened the door.

"How was the meeting, mate?" Ron called from the other room, already knowing who had entered.

Harry and Lily kicked off their shoes. "Long," Harry called back. He walked off toward the kitchen, where Lily assumed the other adults were. She closed the door, and made her way there as well. Her mum, aunt Hermione, and uncle Ron were sitting at the table. Her father was taking something from the fridge.

"Lily!" her mother said happily, seeing her walk in. She got up and hugged her daughter tightly.

"Yes, look who I found waiting at home," Harry teased.

"Why are you here so early?" Ginny asked. "We weren't expecting you until later."

Lily pulled back from the hug. "I left a little earlier. Sorry I didn't tell you what time I was leaving."

"Good to have ya back, Lil," Ron said, taking a drink of whatever was in his glass. "Have a seat, kid."

Lily grinned and took a seat at the table as well. "Thank you, but shouldn't you be at work?" she teased.

Ron grinned slyly. "My boss gave me the day off so I could have dinner with my family," he taunted back.

Lily bit back a laugh, but Hermione rolled her eyes. Lily could tell that she was biting back a comment. So she saved her. "So, we're having dinner at grandma's tonight?"

"That's the plan," her mother told her. "Victoire thinks that they should tell us as soon as possible."

"That must mean that it's good, otherwise it would just give us more time to attack," Ron said with a laugh. Harry began to laugh too.

"Ronald," Hermione chided.

Ron ignored her scornful look. "So, when are the other kids expected to arrive?"

"Late afternoon, like always, Ron," Hermione told him. Then she looked at her niece. "Are you hungry at all, Lily?"

Lily shook her head. "No, I had a sandwich at home, and then Dad and I had ice-cream."

Harry looked away as Ginny gave him a sly look. "So, how long have you been back then?"

Lily shrugged and smiled. "A couple of hours, I guess."

"And you couldn't even tell me, Harry?" Ginny demanded with mock anger.

Harry gave a small smile. "Surprise."

Ginny rolled her eyes and laughed. "Lily's been a surprise since before she was born."

The adults laughed, while Lily's brow furrowed in confusion as she tried to understand the joke. And when she did, she wanted to gag.

Boredom caught up with Lily very quickly as the adults continued their previous conversation. She quickly gave the excuse that she was going to her grandparents' house, and then Flooed over there. She knew she couldn't work on the bike, because her grandfather was probably at work. But she knew her grandmother would be there. She was right, and was pulled into a tight hug immediately.

"What are you doing here so early?" Molly asked.

Lily shrugged. "I was bored, so I decided I'd come over here. The others won't be around for a while."

"Well, I was just cleaning up a bit for the get-together. Care to help?" Molly asked.

Lily smiled. "Sure."

For hours, Lily helped her grandmother in any way she could. She cleaned, and then she started to help cook when it got later in the day. When it began to grow dim outside, Lily could hear the sounds of Apparition from the kitchen, and she knew other were arriving.

"Oh, they're here!" her grandmother squealed in excitement. She left the kitchen to greet them all. Lily stayed where she was, stirring a bowl of chocolate for a dessert her grandmother was making. She could hear the voices greeting each other, and tried to ignore the sadness creeping in on her. Her brothers and the others were never happy to see her anymore. Only Louis.

"Hey, Little L." Lily didn't turn around. She knew who it was. Only her uncle Charlie ever called her that.

"Hey, Uncle Charlie. How's it going?" she asked, finally turning away from the chocolate to look at him.

"Pretty good. Thankfully I got time to come and listen to the supposed big announcement," Charlie said with a smile. "And you?"

"Not too bad, I guess. Just bored," she replied.

Then her grandmother finally came back in. "Oh, Lily, let me finish this up. Dinner will be ready in just a few minutes. Charlie, help her set the tables up outside," she told them.

"Aye, aye, Mum," Charlie said with a laugh.

Lily didn't really do anything. With a flick of his wand, Charlie had the tables set up outside, and with another flick all the dinnerware flew out and set themselves.

"I wish I was of age," Lily muttered, sitting down at a chair.

Charlie laughed and ruffled her hair. "Don't worry, Little L. You will be eventually."

Soon dinner had started, and everyone was settled and eating all the food Lily and her grandmother had made. Lily was seated between Louis and Teddy. It helped her ignore the tension between her and the others. After her thoughts over ice-cream earlier, the tension seemed thick enough to choke her. Had it always been like that?

Teddy and Victoire were oddly quiet during dinner, not really saying anything. It made Lily suspicious, and made her much more curious on what their announcement was. But she wasn't the only one.

Once dinner was finished, Bill cleared his throat before the dessert could be brought out. "So, are you two going to tell us what this is about?" he demanded of his daughter and Teddy.

Lily watched Teddy take in a small gulp, and saw that Victoire was blushing. "Shouldn't we have dessert first?" Victoire asked timidly.

But Bill was firm. "No, I think now is a good time. And I'll tell you one thing, boy, my daughter better not be pregnant."

"William!" Molly and Fleur scolded.

Lily bit her lip, trying not to laugh at Teddy and Victoire's panicked looks. The others, however, laughed.

Teddy and Victoire both stood up, looking a little shaky. "Well, that's not what we wanted to tell you," Victoire assured.

Teddy grabbed her hand and took a deep breath. "Victoire and I are getting married in July."

The table seemed to explode with cheers and congratulations. Lily only smiled happily up at her brother, who looked very relieved. She was glad he was happy, and she was glad that those two were finally getting married. Lily laughed as the women started to think up plans for the wedding, and she laughed as she saw Teddy's exasperated look. He looked down at her.

"What do you think, sis?" he asked.

Lily just smiled. "I'm thinking that you'd better come to terms with the fact that you won't be planning your own wedding."

Teddy laughed and ruffled her hair. "Yeah, I didn't think I would be. Like Dom says, what man has style?"

Lily rolled her eyes. "It's not like she's wrong. Have you seen how our brothers dress?"

Over the next few days, all Lily heard was talk of the upcoming wedding. Victoire seemed to now be living at their house, because Lily seemed to never see her leave. All through the day Victoire, her mum, her aunt Fleur, and her grandmother, and usually her aunt Hermione, all sat around the kitchen and made plans for the wedding. Teddy was usually working, but when he was dragged along with her, he usually stayed away from the kitchen, instead choosing to spend time with his siblings.

Lily tried not to grimace when she found that Victoire was determined to have Lily as a bridesmaid. Her and Rose. She almost had to beg Dominique to be her maid of honor. It wasn't that Lily didn't want to be part of their wedding. In fact, she felt honored that they asked. But it was the idea of having to wear a dress again. One that Victoire would pick out. Something frilly and cute. It made Lily shudder. Inside, she felt that if she was just watching the wedding, she'd have been able to convince her mother to let her wear something subtle. But if she was taking part in the ceremony . . . she was screwed.

She was happy to be going back to school. She Flooed back, having approval from Professor Brown. She didn't let her brothers know, so she went back to Teddy and Victoire's place to stay there one night, and the boys thought that they were dropping her off. But actually, she Flooed back from their flat.

"Welcome back, Lily," Professor Brown greeted when she stumbled into her office.

Lily smiled as she wiped the soot off of her clothes and skin. "Hey, Jacob. How's life?"

He smiled. "Very well. And how was your time at home?"

"Teddy and Victoire are getting married during the summer," Lily told him, moving to stand by his desk. She moved to sit on it.

"Really? How exciting."

Lily shrugged. "Yeah, they seem really happy, that's what matters."

Professor Brown nodded. "So, you have one last free day. What will you do?"

Lily sighed and hopped down from his desk. "I think I'll go see my friends, and spend the day with them. Plus, I need to make sure Jace and Lola haven't killed each other."

Professor Brown gave a laugh. "Well, good luck with that, Lily. I'll see you around."

"Later, Jake," she said with a wave, and then left his office.

Lily trudged her way down the stone steps, and meandered down the halls. There were a few kids around the halls, but as she passed a window, she saw that a lot of kids were outside. Lily tossed her bag over her shoulder, and headed down to the dungeons. When she reached the 'dead end', Lily gave the password, and walked into her common room when the wall slid apart. Only a few older kids were in the common room, studying hard as their tests came closer and closer.

Lily waved to a few older kids as she passed them on her way to the second year dorm room. It was empty when she walked in, so she threw her bag onto her bed, and began to take everything out of it. She was just putting the last thing away when the door opened again. Lily looked to see Lola walking in, smiling and reading a letter.

Lola finally noticed Lily was in the room, and her smile faltered. But it came back just as quick, and she stuffed the letter in her pocket. "Lily!" She gave Lily a quick hug. "When did you get back?"

Lily smiled. "Just a bit ago. Who's the letter from?"

Lily watched as Lola seemed to hesitate. "Um . . . it was from Johnny. But," she gave a wave, "anyway, how was Easter?"

"Teddy and Victoire are getting married," Lily told her, nicely leaving the topic of the letter alone.

Lola smiled brightly. "Really? That's great!"

Lily smiled too. "Yeah, I get to be a bridesmaid."

"Aw! You're so lucky!" Lola squealed.

Lily did her best not to roll her eyes. "So, how were things here?"

"Mitch pierced his own ear, three times," Lola said, her face twisted in disgust.

Lily raised a brow. "What? I gave him a place he could go to this summer! Why didn't he wait?"

Lola did roll her eyes. "He's impatient. He said that he couldn't wait, so he did it. And his ear was a bloody mess!"

"Is he ok?" Lily asked. She moved to sit on the bed.

"His ear's fine. He just didn't clean it after, so the bloody got all dried and gross," Lola said in disgust.

Lily laughed. "Sounds like him."

Lola grinned. "Oh, but he doesn't want you to worry. He's still going to use that place you gave him to pierce something else. He thinks it might hurt less."

When Lily saw Mitch later that day, she tried not to laugh. There was still dried blood around the holes in his ears, and his earrings looked like key-rings. He gave a mock glare at her smile.

"Don't you dare laugh at me, Lily Luna. I did my best," he grumbled. But he ended up smiling. "You think that place can fix this?"

Lily finally let out a laugh and nodded. "Yeah, just take out the key rings and let the holes close up first. And one more piece of advice: Never do that again."

Mitch rolled his eyes. "Yeah, yeah."

Chapter Fifteen: Guilty Cheaters Can't Handle the Truth

Lily sighed as she laid back on the grass. It was a beautiful day near the end of April, and she was laying in the grass next to Louis. She rolled her shoulders, wanting to just relax. Her game against Hufflepuff was coming up, and Raven had been working them hard again. Time to relax became rare, so Lily took the time she could to see Louis.

"So, did you hear about James and Fred?" Louis asked suddenly.

Lily turned her head toward him and raised a brow. "What, did the lovers have another tiff?" she asked snidely. Lately she couldn't help it. After coming to terms with the fact that her brothers would never accept her House, she couldn't handle talking about them without hiding her sadness with anger.

Louis ignored her tone. "They got into a huge fight a while back. They aren't even friends anymore. They pretty much hate each other," he told her.

Lily sat up in surprise. Fred and James? They weren't friends? Lily remembered back to when James had told their parents of a small tiff. Had it been worse than he'd made it seem? Ever since Lily could remember, James and Fred had been glued at the hips. They were the best of friends. But then again, Lily thought sadly, she and James had been close, and look at them now.

"What happened?" she asked, her voice calm now.

Louis shrugged. "No idea. They've been pretty tight lipped about it."

Lily laid back onto her back again, her mind reeling from this shocking news. "Wow. I never thought that Fred and James would split."

"Yeah. Lately, Fred has been studying for his O.W.L.s, and James is hanging with a different crowd of people and strutting around the halls," Louis told her.

Lily had seen that. She was always surprised to see Fred in the library, and it was hard to miss James arrogantly walking through the castle. "Why is Fred studying so much?" she wondered aloud.

"No clue. Probably the only way that he could avoid James. James has barely cracked open a book apparently," he replied.

Lily hesitated, but then finally relented. "What about the others?" she muttered.

"Well, Molly has practically been living in the library. I swear she has a room in there." Lily laughed. "And, Lucy and Roxy have been normal. Albus has been a bit different. He's still hanging around James, so he's starting to act just like him. Rose has still been trying to keep everyone in line. And Dominique's been going through boys like Chocolate Frogs. And it's never anyone that the others like."

"Do you like the ones she picks?" Lily asked.

"Well, I won't say I approve, but I have no problems with who she dates. It's her business," Louis mumbled.

"Is there a reason she's acting like a . . . ?" Lily trailed off, not wanting to upset Louis with a rude name to his sister.

Louis snorted. "No idea. I think she's just trying to rebel."

Lily gave a nod. "And what about you? Anyone interest you?"

Now he laughed. "Nah. I like when it's just me. Girls are still icky," he joked.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Boys," she teased.

Louis scoffed. "Girls," he retorted with a smile.

Lily found herself in the library just an hour before curfew. She was browsing through the shelves, looking for a good potion book. She'd decided to find a book to entertain her, and a potion book seemed like the best idea. Better than reading about goblin rebellions, she thought as she passed another book on the subject.

"Potions, potions," she mumbled quietly.

"Wrong section," a dull voice said from behind her.

Lily jumped, startled, and turned around. She was surprised to find Fred standing behind her, a book in his hand as well. "Fred! You scared me half to death!" Lily chided, ignoring the fact that they no longer liked each other.

Fred didn't seem to really care. "My bad," he muttered.

Lily shook her head. "What did you say, though?"

"I said that you are in the wrong section," he repeated. "Potion books are two bookshelves down."

"Oh," Lily mumbled, feeling a little dumb. "Well, . . . thanks."

Fred shrugged. "No problem. If I may ask, what are you getting a book for?"

Lily felt uncomfortable. She and Fred had never gotten into a verbal fight like her and James, but she knew that Fred used to be on James's side. "Um, entertainment, I guess."

Fred nodded. "Well, then, if I may, I'd suggest Common Magical Ailments and Afflictions. It's a book on healing, but it does give some interesting potions."

Lily raised a brow, confused at his seemingly nice offer. "Um, thanks, Fred."

Fred moved to put his book back. He didn't even look at her. "Yeah. It's on the bookshelf behind us."

He didn't look back at her. Instead, Fred kept his eyes on the books in front of them, searching. Lily felt a little awkward, so she walked away, moving to find the recommended book. It only took a few moments before Lily found the book he was talking about. She flipped it open, and skimmed through the potions. She saw what he meant. There were some potions, some that seemed like they could be of use. After all, injuries were becoming popular during Slytherin's Quidditch practice. It could be useful. So Lily checked out the book.

As she walked out of the library, Lily caught sight of Fred sitting at a table, his nose buried in a book. But his eyes seemed glassy. She

began to wonder how the fight had affected Fred. Not long after leaving the library, she caught sight of James laughing with a rowdy group of Gryffindors. She felt even more anger toward him than usual. Fred had become so different and detached, yet James didn't seem at all affected by their fight. How heartless had he become?

Lily couldn't separate herself from her book that night. She sat curled on one of the couches in the common room, reading the book faithfully. It was late, but thankfully she didn't have lessons tomorrow. Lily was loving weekends.

"Good book?"

Lily turned her head to see Scorpius coming to sit next to her feet on the couch. "What are you doing up still?" Lily asked.

"Lars is snoring. Loudly. Sadly, he fell asleep before I did," Scorpius joked.

Lily smirked. "Poor you," she teased.

He grinned. "So, is that a good book? You've been reading it since I went up to go to bed."

"It's really interesting actually," Lily said with a smile. "For being a book on healing, it's not bad."

"You wanting to be a healer?" Scorpius asked.

She shook her head. "No, I just like potions. I'm actually good at it."

Scorpius scoffed. "You are good at a lot of things, and you don't focus on them as much as you do with potions."

Lily shrugged. "I don't know. I just really like potions."

"I'm not knocking it. I love potions. Just pointing out your . . . passion for it, I guess."

Lily gave a small laugh. But then she sobered. Thoughts of where she got the book brought her to memories of James and Fred. "Scorpius, can I ask you something?"

He smirked. "Yeah, go for it."

"If you and Mitch were to ever get into a fight and stop being friends, would you immediately start hanging out with others, be happy, and just ignore him?" Lily asked, all of her words coming out in a rush. She felt a little of her earlier anger coming back. She still didn't get how James could just bounce back. After all, even she was sad when she lost Hugo.

Scorpius dropped his smirk and looked at her seriously. "Well, not right away. I wouldn't be able to do that for a long time. He is my best friend, almost a brother. And I mean it when I say something like that. If I were to act like that, then I'd just be stomping on every memory I share with him."

Lily felt a little relieved. It was what she wanted to hear. She wanted to hear that someone would be sad. But . . . she wanted to know that James was sad. Even though she didn't like him, she wanted to know that he was human.

"Why the serious question, Lil?" Scorpius asked quietly.

Lily was quiet for a moment, before finally letting it all spill out. "Fred and James had a fight, and Fred seems really different. Like he's upset about it. And James is off hanging out with other friends, and doesn't seem at all upset about it! Like he doesn't even care! Like it doesn't matter that he lost his best friend!"

Scorpius raised a brow at her rant. Then he gave a small grin. "Feel better?" he joked.

Lily gave a small smile back, but they both knew it wasn't sincere.

"Look, Lily Lu, I can't tell you why James does what he does. I'm thankfully not him. But, . . . you don't know what happened during the fight. Honestly, I doubt that James was innocent, but maybe there's a reason for why he's acting like nothing happened," Scorpius thought out.

Lily stared at him, thinking over his words. "Well, maybe. But I still think he's just being a total ass."

Scorpius laughed. "Well no doubt that fact started their fight!"

Lily laughed too. "I agree completely."

Scorpius died down to a chuckle. "So, was that Hugo boy your best friend?"

Lily cleared her throat, a hesitation coming into her. "Yeah. Yeah, he was. We'd been best friends since we were born. We grew up together after all."

"Were you sad when you two stopped being friends?"

Lily smirked at him now. "That's a dumb question. Of course I was. In a way, I'm still a little sad about it. We were great friends. I mean . . . I know I was wrong. We both were, but . . . he says he doesn't like Slytherin, and I'm a Slytherin. I can't change that."

"Do you hope that you'll be friends again?" he asked.

Lily sighed. "I hope, but . . . I'm not sure if we will be. It might take a lot to fix what we've said and done to each other."

Scorpius was silent for a long moment. "You know, I don't hate Gryffindors. They hate me. They hate me because I'm a Slytherin, and because I'm a Malfoy. That's what makes me hate them. It wouldn't seem like I was hating an entire group if there was at least one Gryffindor that didn't try to act like a mighty saint."

Lily looked at his somber face. "They don't hate you. They hate your father and our House, and what they used to stand for. They didn't change, so they don't believe that we could have. Every Malfoy is evil, and every Slytherin is a death eater."

"My mother wasn't a death eater," he said softly.

"I know," she said just as softly. "I couldn't imagine Astoria Malfoy being a death eater. She's way too . . . accepting."

Scorpius gave a small smile. "Yeah. I'd like to think that I can be like that at times."

Lily patted his shoulder gently. "You are, Scorpius. I think our friendship is proof of that."

Lily sat by Scorpius as the Quidditch team waited for Raven to come out of the captain's office. Today was their last match of the season. Their match against Hufflepuff. Last year, they'd butchered the Hufflepuff team, and they were hoping for a repeat.

Raven came out and examined the team silently. "Well," he finally spoke, "I don't think we need a speech this time. The only new thing is their new Beater, Mark Summerby, and they still haven't won a game. They haven't won a game for over two and a half years, and I'll be damned if their first win is against us. So, let's get out there, and let's kick some ass, alright?"

The entire team was rowdy as they made their way to the field. And when the game began, Lily made sure she was high above the teams. She watched as Kimberly Rickett stayed a little lower. From what she'd heard, Rickett was a little shaky since her hit last year. Personally, Lily thought the Hufflepuffs need a better Seeker.

"And Hufflepuff has the Quaffle," Meredith announced. "Macmillan goes up the field, she passes it to Whitby, and Whitby goes up a few yards and then passes it to Fleet. Fleet passes it back to Macmillan, who throws it back to him. The three Chasers are throwing the Quaffle back-and-forth, and the Slytherin team can't seem to keep up. Macmillan throws the Quaffle, . . . and Hufflepuff makes the first goal! Ten points to Hufflepuff!"

Lily sighed as she heard the announcement. Had they gotten too cocky?

"Montague throws the Quaffle to Nott, but it's intercepted by Whitby, who tosses it for another ten points!"

"Watch your back, Nott!" Lily heard Raven yell loudly.

Lily sucked in a breath as a Bludger whizzed by her head. She glanced back to see Jason Smith staring at her intently, his Beater bat on his shoulder.

"Watch Lu, Goyle!" Raven bellowed.

Lily sighed. She could tell that this was going to be a long game.

"And that makes the score two hundred and sixty to one hundred and forty, with Hufflepuff in the lead!" Meredith cheered, probably happy her sister's team was winning, and that Slytherin was losing. As the game continued, Raven was getting angrier and angrier. There wasn't one player that hadn't been yelled at by him in the course of the game. And the worst had happened. Adrian had been knocked out, leaving only two Chasers. Raven had called a timeout, and then ranted forever when he found that his reserve Chaser wasn't on the pitch, because he was studying for his N.E.W.T.s. Lily was waiting for him to throw something.

The whistle was blown, and Lily looked over at Madam Hooch. "Slytherin calls a timeout!" she announced.

"And it looks like Bole needs time to yell at his team once again," Meredith joked, making everyone but the Slytherins laugh.

Lily flew over with the rest of the team. Raven was pacing on the ground, steam practically coming out of his ears.

"What's up, Rave?" Lars asked.

Raven was glaring, but Lily wasn't alarmed. He'd been glaring since Hufflepuff had gained a fifty-point lead half an hour ago. "Ok," he said, seemingly calm, "we need a new strategy."

"Did our reserve show up?" Will Nott asked.

"No," Raven growled.

"Well we need someone!" Scorpius muttered. "Me and Will can't do this alone. They're killing us!"

Raven rubbed his temples. "Scorpius, can your cousin play?"

"He's a better Beater," Scorpius told him.

"Well he'll have to do. Go get him," Raven commanded.

Scorpius mounted his broom, and flew off to the stands. Lars looked back at Raven. "So, what should we do?"

Raven sighed, his eyes closing. "Ok, who here wants to win this game? A raise of hands." They all raised their hands, and Raven opened his eyes to count. "Ok, now who will do whatever it takes to win this game?" Once again they all raised their hands. "Ok, so here is our strategy . . . "

"I got him," Scorpius said as he flew back down. "Tanner is getting changed now. So, what are we doing?"

"We're playing dirty," Raven said. "I don't care about stereotypes right now. So, I want us playing rough and dirty. Just do what you have to so that we can win!"

"Dirty players unite!" Dante said with a laugh.

It was then that Tanner came running out onto the field. "Is this your reserve?" Madam Hooch asked as she came over to the team.

"Yes, he's replacing Adrian," Raven told her.

"Well, are you ready?" she asked him.

"We are. Scorpius, fill Tanner in on what we just talked about," Raven told him as they all flew into the air. Lily rose high to the sky again, but this time she stayed close enough to Rickett. If she had to play dirty, she would.

"And it seems as if Tanner Zabini is filling in for Adrian Flint!" Meredith announced. "And Macmillan has the Quaffle, but she's taken out by Malfoy, who passes it to Nott!"

Lily looked to where Scorpius was being reprimanded by Madam Hooch, but then she heard the Slytherins cheer.

"And Nott scores ten points for Slytherin!"

The next hour consisted of the Slytherin team cheating and being rough. Hufflepuff had taken at least twenty foul shots. But it was to Slytherin's benefit. Only two of the foul shots made it, they'd taken out one of their Beaters and two of their Chasers, and the score was now three hundred to two hundred ninety, Slytherin in the lead. Hufflepuff had been able to replace their Chasers, but both reserves were young and small, making them easy targets for the Slytherin

team. Rickett had been hit by two Bludgers, but was still riding high on her broom. Lily gave her credit for her endurance.

"Potter, keep your eyes out for the Snitch!" Raven yelled to Lily.

Lily didn't look at him, but she gave a small nod to show that she understood. She began to circle the pitch, her eyes scanning the pitch carefully. They couldn't lose the game.

"And the Slytherin team gets ten more points after that total show of Cobbing from Zabini!" Meredith complained.

A flash of gold passed through Lily's sight, moving toward the crowd. It seemed that Rickett saw it too, because she began moving toward Lily. But being ahead already, Lily zoomed off, flying barely above the crowd. She was above the Gryffindors, and could hear their boos and jeers, and cheers for Rickett. Lily glanced back to see Rickett on her tail. The Snitch was zigzagging over the crowd, dodging Lily at every turn. Lily kept her hand out, fingers ready to close around it at first chance.

But then there was a hand next to her, also outstretched, fingers poised. Lily looked to see the shaky eyes of Kimberly Rickett. Lily sped up, reaching out a little farther. Rickett followed suit. The Snitch was close, just in front of their hands. Then their hands overlapped, the Snitch hidden by the shadows they cast.

"The Snitch has been caught!" Meredith yelled. "The winner is . . ."

Lily sighed as she washed the sweat off of her. It had been close, and they had barely won the game. And they had won because Lily had followed Raven's order. She had played dirty. The Snitch had been Rickett's hand, just before Lily slipped it into her own hand. No one but Rickett had noticed, and Rickett hadn't said a thing. The game had ended with four hundred and sixty points for Slytherin.

Lily dried off with a towel and dressed into a normal shirt and jeans. She threw the towel and game clothes into the basket, and made her way into the main part of the locker room. Only Dante and Will were there, pulling on their shirts.

"Good game, Lu!" Dante said with a grin.

Lily gave a small smile back as she changed her shoes. "Thanks, Dante. Nice job toward the end of the match."

Dante gave a proud sniff. "Thanks. I thought the same."

Lily chuckled at his ego. She shut her locker and sat down on the bench. Scorpius and Lars walked in too, throwing their gear into their lockers.

"Nice catch, Lil," Lars complimented.

"Just a Slytherin," Lily joked. She leaned back against the locker and closed her eyes.

"You made Jamie proud out there," Scorpius joked.

"Going to the victory party tonight, Lily?" she heard Tanner asked.

"Nah," she replied. "I think I'll just relax up in the dorms."

"I know what I'm doing tonight," Will joked. The other guys all laughed. Lily tried not to scowl.

"Alright, team, listen up!"

Lily opened her eyes. Raven was standing in front of the team, a towel around his shoulders, his hair damp.

"Ok, that was a shitty game," Raven said bluntly. "And I know we can do better than that!" he paused, and looked at them all. "But, it doesn't matter. The game's over, we won, and the season is over for us. This wasn't our best year . . . so you'd all better be better next year. I won't be hearing of my House's team sucking ass after I've graduated. Got it?"

"Any idea of who'll be captain, Rave?" Lars asked.

Rave sighed as he sat on the bench next to his own locker. "Not yet. But from my understanding, the Headmaster and Head of House usually talk to the current captain and take their suggestion into consideration."

"Who would you consider?" Dante asked, suppressed eagerness in his voice.

Raven chuckled. "I'm not standing in front of that Bludger. No, you guys will just have to see who becomes captain next year."

"You suck," Lars said with a laugh. The team had all shut their lockers, and headed out onto the pitch. It was a thrilling day for them, but Lily still felt a little guilt for her actions. She had cheated, and nothing had happened to her. Could she really get away with things like that? Did the world work like that?

Outside, Lily noticed the Hufflepuff captain, Paxton Smith, apparently lecturing Kimberly Rickett. Lily slowed her walk, knowing that the boys wouldn't notice in the mist of their conversations of girls, Quidditch, and Merlin knows what else. Then she stopped walking altogether. Smith looked furious, while Rickett seemed subdued. Eventually Smith stomped away, while Rickett just watched him. Lily hurried over to where the girl was standing.

"Hey, Rickett!" Lily called.

Rickett turned to look at Lily. She became a bit annoyed. "Look, Potter, if you're here to gloat, I don't want to hear it. I've got enough crap from my captain."

Lily flushed a bit. "No, that's not it."

Any hostility in Rickett's eyes left. "Then what did you want?"

"Well, . . . it's just . . . why didn't you rat me out? I took the Snitch from your hands. If you had said something, I'd have been in trouble, and we'd probably would have gotten some big foul. I mean, Hooch would have believed your word over mine," Lily rambled.

Rickett threw a bag over her shoulder. "And what good would that have done? Paxton would be up in Bole's face, and Bole would have screamed his head off saying it wasn't true. Both of them don't understand that it's just a game. So, it doesn't matter to me who wins. I mean, I'm just playing because I needed to fill my time, and because I can actually play. So, take your win, and just keep your mouth shut that you cheated to do it, and everything will be fine."

Lily stared at the third year in surprise. "So, you're not even mad that I cheated?"

She shrugged. "I guess I was a little annoyed during the rush of the game. But it's over, and I can't do anything about it now. So, don't let it bother you, Potter. After all, a heavy life is a life of regrets." Rickett moved past Lily and made her way down the pitch. Lily didn't move, but instead she stared at the grass below her.

"Good job out there, Miss Potter."

Lily whirled around to see Professor Brown walking toward her. "Oh. Thanks, Professor."

"And it's nice to see you taking responsibility for your actions," he said with a smile.

Lily's eyes went wide. "You . . . you heard that?"

Professor Brown nodded. "Yes, I heard."

Lily sighed. "So, what happens to me and the team?"

"Nothing," he told her, to Lily's surprise. "What's done is done. Plus, I don't think Miss Rickett wants anything to happen. I think I'll respect that."

Lily gave a small smile. "Thanks, sir."

Professor Brown smiled. "Well, it's no problem at all, Miss Potter. Now, I was wondering if you would like to accompany me to the Three Broomsticks?"

Lily's eyes went wide again. "What? You . . . you mean now?"

He chuckled. "Yes. I was wondering if we could have a talk?"

Lily felt a little hesitant, and a little afraid. Had she done something? Or was he really wanting to just talk? After all, he was odd enough for his suggestion to be truthful. "Um, sure."

"Wonderful," he said with a chuckle. "Follow me, Miss Potter."

Lily felt odd walking into the Three Broomsticks with the Headmaster of her school, as a second year, and since it wasn't a Hogsmeade weekend. But the crowded pub didn't seem to pay any attention to her. So she followed Professor Brown up to the counter of the bar.

"Ah, hello there, Jacob. What can I do for ya?" the barmaid asked.

Professor Brown smiled. "Hello to you as well, Rosmerta. Could I get two butterbeers?"

"Or course," she told him. She pulled out two bottles and began to take off the caps. "So, who's the little lady next to ya?"

Professor Brown put a hand on Lily's shoulder. "This here is one of my students. Her name's Lily."

Rosmerta examined Lily, as if trying to figure something out. Lily was sure that she was trying to relate her to her mother or father. But she gave up, and handed both bottles to Professor Brown. "Well, it's great to meet ya, Lily. Don't let Jacob here talk your ear off about philosophies."

Lily only chuckled, while Professor Brown laughed. "Yeah, I'll just lie and say I need the bathroom."

Professor Brown handed Rosmerta the money. "And here you are. Thank you very much."

"Anytime," Rosmerta told him.

Professor Brown led her to an empty table. Once she had sat down, he handed Lily a butterbeer. "Here you go, Lily."

Lily gave a smile. "Thank you, Jacob." She took a big drink, her throat dry after that game. "So, what did you want to talk about?"

Professor Brown took a drink of his own. Then he sighed. "Tell me, why do you hang around Miss Pritchard and Mr. Pucey?"

Lily raised a brow at the question. "Well, they're my best friends."

"But why?" he inquired.

Lily took another drink. "Well, Lola was the only girl that didn't care about my family after I was sorted. And Jace was at first just the funny boy that sat next to me at breakfast. I guess we just kind of clicked."

"Who was your best friend before them? Surely you had one?" Professor Brown questioned.

"Hugo," Lily told him. "Before Hogwarts, Hugo and I did everything together. We caused trouble around Godric's Hollow, we played pranks, and we listened to our grandfather talk about Muggle things all day."

Professor Brown laughed. "Do you do those things without him now?"

She gave a shrug. "Some. I mean, Godric's Hollow is boring when it's just you, so now I usually go to Diagon Alley." Lily took another quick drink. "So, what was your favorite part about being a Hufflepuff?"

Professor Brown hummed for a moment. "Well, I really liked my housemates. I loved interacting with them, talking and getting to know each of them."

Lily laughed. "You're just the social butterfly, aren't you, Jake?"

Professor Brown laughed too. "Yes, I have been. It's what made me become a teacher." He took a drink. "So, your brother had his Career Advice a few months ago."

Lily raised a brow, wondering what his point was. "And?"

"Well, I was told that he said that he wanted to be a professional Quidditch player. Preferably for the Chudley Cannons." He paused and looked her in the eye. "What do you think?"

Lily took a drink, still wondering why he was asking her opinion. "Well, I'm not surprised. He's always been a fan of the Cannons. And, he'll probably end up being a great player in the leagues," she answered. "So, you tell me, what did you think when I got sorted into Slytherin?"

"Well, I was honestly surprised when the hat sorted you. But then I thought that I had found a very interesting student to . . . well, 'pick apart', you could say," he answered.

"You like picking people's brains, huh?" Lily asked, taking a big gulp.

"It's very fun," he said with a smile. "Something I picked up from being a 'social butterfly' and being a very curious person. Aren't you ever curious about people, and why they do what they do?"

She shrugged. "Sometimes, I wonder. But, things happen, and no matter how much I pick apart why it happened, it won't change anything. It still happened, and I can't change that."

"But you can change the outcome!" Professor Brown said excitedly. "I mean, if you found out that there was another reason that your brother James hates Slytherins besides the last war, wouldn't your opinion about him change? Perhaps it would make you even angrier, or it could make you want to stop fighting with him, or you might start respecting him and his hatred. It may not change what happened, but it could change part of the future!"

Lily looked at her excited professor, the eagerness in his eyes shining brightly. She was waiting for him to begin bouncing in his seat. But she did not laugh at this idea. His words were swirling around in her head. Changing outcomes . . . was that possible? Probably. But . . . was it worth it to try? If it just made it angrier, was that better? In her heart, Lily knew that she didn't want to know. She couldn't handle the truth.

e Year Drags On and On

Lily read over her Potions essay once more. It was her last essay before her exams. She sat at breakfast, reading it as she ate her toast. She had a lot on her mind though, what with the last Quidditch match of the season.

"Potter!"

Lily jumped, knocking over her orange juice. Jace picked up his book before the juice could reach it, and Lola hurried to throw a napkin over it. Raven was rushing over to her.

"Was yelling necessary?" Lily demanded, making sure her irritation showed as she scowled.

Raven placed his hands on the table next to her. "Yes, to show the importance. You're not going to Potions class today."

Lily's brow furrowed. "What, why?"

"We have Quidditch practice," Raven told her.

"You're taking her out of Potions just to play Quidditch?" Lola exclaimed.

Raven nodded. "Yeah, I've even got a note from Slughorn, letting you out of class. We have to practice as much as we can before our final game!" he insisted.

Lily sighed, a headache already forming. The Ravenclaw team had killed the Gryffindor team in their match. The game had ended with six hundred and ten points for Ravenclaw, and four hundred and ninety for Gryffindor. Albus had caught the Snitch, ending the game and Gryffindor's humiliation. The whole Slytherin team had gotten a laugh out of the loss, until they were told that Slytherin and Ravenclaw were tied for points for the Quidditch Cup, which meant they had to have a deciding match. Raven had been brutal.

"I don't think you should be taking her out classes though," Lola retorted carefully.

Jace rolled his eyes. "This is important, dirty. They have to practice!"

Lola glared at him. "Her education is much more important! Besides, exams are coming up!"

"So what? Lily's smart, she'll do good no matter what," Jace assured.

"Unlike you, who can't even barely tie his shoes," Lola said scathingly.

Jace glared back at her now. "Or you, who can't even wash your hair!"

"It's my natural color, jerk!"

"Well it looks like you rubbed dirt in it!"

"Your ears look ready to take off in flight!"

"I'll grow into them!"

"Too bad you can't grow a brain!"

"Too bad you can't be as pretty as your sister!"

Lola glared once more at him, then she gathered her things and stormed off. Jace turned back to his plate and stabbed at his sausage. Lily and Raven had been watching with uninterested eyes at first, but then they were watching with surprise. When Lola was gone, Raven looked at Jace.

"Smooth move, kid," he mocked.

Jace didn't say anything, but instead just gnawed on his food.

Lily shook her head and looked at Raven. "I'll be there, ok. Don't worry. We'll win the game, Rave."

"We better," Raven muttered. He patted her shoulder. "Later, Lu."

Jace stood and gathered his bag. "Come on, Lil. Let's go to class."

Lily nodded, and put her things away, and threw her bag over her shoulder. "Yeah, let's go then."

Their walk to the History of Magic classroom was silent. Jace was still scowling, glaring as he walked. Lily just kept silent, not wanting to set his seemingly short fuse off again. When they both entered the classroom, Lily saw Lola sitting with Shannon and Izzy, two other Slytherin girls. Lily saw Jace quickly look somewhere else.

"Let's sit with Hunter and Monty, Lil," Jace suggested, pointing at the two Slytherins.

Lily glanced back at Lola, but then sighed. "Alright, sounds good." The two moved over and sat down next to Hunter Baddock and Monty Urquhart.

"No Lola today?" Monty asked, blowing his brown hair out of his face.

Jace scoffed. "Why would we sit with some stuck-up priss?" he muttered.

"I heard that," Hunter agreed.

Lily rolled her eyes. She could feel her headache growing with each moment.

Lily laid back on the bench and closed her eyes. The boys were still all showering, and she was already dressed and ready to leave. But she didn't want to. The last thing she wanted to do was go into the middle of the tense atmosphere that Lola and Jace had created. The five-hour Quidditch practice had been enough for her. Raven had gotten all the younger teammates passes to be out after curfew, just for the sake of practice. Inside, they all wanted to strangle him. But it was eight o'clock, which was too late to strangle someone. Not to mention, they were all dead tired. Lily just wanted to sleep there, and never get up.

"Um . . . hello?"

Lily groaned, but she opened her eyes. Stacy West was standing at the open door of the locker room. "Raven's still showering, Stacy," she told her.

"Oh," Stacy said, biting her lip. "Well, may I come in here and wait?"

Lily shrugged and laid her head back down. "I don't care. Just be ready for the hoard of boys that run in here to change."

She heard Stacy laugh, and then the close of the door. Tiny footsteps came closer, and then she felt something near her feet. "So, how was practice."

"Most of the team is conspiring to kill your boyfriend in his sleep," Lily grumbled.

She heard a sigh. "He's really dedicated to this game."

"I'd call it a sport around him," Lily warned.

"Oh, I do. I just wish he wouldn't put so much time into it," Stacy mumbled.

Lily cracked open one eye to look at the girl sitting next to her feet. "What's wrong with that?"

Stacy looked a little guilty. "Well . . . nothing I guess. It's just . . . he spends so much time playing this dumb game that I feel like I haven't seen him in forever. I mean, I'd rather a romantic moment actually be romantic, not just strip and . . ."

"Woah!" Lily interrupted. She held up a hand. "Just stop that sentence right there. That is more than I need to hear."

Stacy giggled. "Sorry, I forget that you're only twelve. You act so mature."

"Well thanks, but, if you could get onto the main point," Lily hinted.

"Well, it's just that we haven't had a date in forever because Quidditch Season hasn't ended. Some . . . 'moments' have just become dull . . ."

"Eww, Stacy," Lily groaned.

",and he talks about nothing else when we do talk! I mean . . . I knew that it practically ran his life, but now it's almost running mine!" Stacy exclaimed.

Lily's face twisted into confusion. She sat up and looked at Stacy. "You're not a player, why is it running your life?"

"Well, since I've been dating Rave . . . it kind of has."

"Why are you letting it? I mean, you don't have to spend every waking hour with him. Take time for yourself," Lily told her, laying back down.

"It's different when you're older, Lu," Stacy retorted.

"No, you make it different. Look, my god brother and my cousin are getting married. They are madly in love, and I know for a fact that they don't spend every second together. Aurora talk doesn't run my cousin's life, and St. Mungo's doesn't run my god brother's life. So, just hang out with your friends. A girls' night or something," Lily suggested.

"But . . . I like spending time with him."

"And I'm sure that he likes spending time with you too. But I also know that he enjoys hanging out with his guy friends, and I know that is something he does. So you need to take time to hang out with your friends," Lily told her.

"Woah! Stace, welcome!" Dante said with a laugh.

Lily rolled her eyes, and she was sure that it was Stacy that scoffed. "Hello, Dante," Stacy greeted dryly.

"Don't be an ass, Danny," Scorpius said as he walked in as well. He pulled the towel from around his shoulders, and whipped Dante with it.

"Ow! You son of a bitch!" Dante exclaimed, and whipped him back. Scorpius dodged the attack, and sent his own again.

Lily looked at Stacy as the battle continued. "As he said, welcome, Stacy."

Stacy looked ready to laugh. "Yeah, I'm glad to be here."

"And Stretton scores another ten points for Ravenclaw!" Meredith cheered. "That makes the score six hundred and eighty to eight hundred, with Slytherin still in the lead."

Lily barely heard a word as rain poured and thunder roared in her ears. They had prepared for everything . . . except for this kind of weather. But with the way the game was going, it seemed the Seekers were having the most trouble. Lily could barely see, and Kimball was no where in sight. There hadn't even been a sighting of the Snitch.

"Oh! And it looks like . . . yes. Goyle has been knocked out of the air! Looks like a few teachers are taking him off the pitch," Meredith called.

Lily sighed. That had been the second player they'd lost. Will had been knocked out of the sky half an hour ago. The only player that Ravenclaw had lost was Nadia Belby, a Chaser. And it hadn't seemed to hurt them yet. Thankfully, they had the lead. All she needed was to find the Snitch and end it. And really, it wasn't for the team. She wanted to end it for herself. She was cold, wet, numb practically, and she really felt like killing Raven. Not to mention sore. She'd already take two hits from Bludgers.

"You're not winning this game, Potter," she heard. Lily looked back to see Mark Kimball not far from her, just in sight.

Lily gave him a mocking look. "You know, you've told me that before. Just before I caught the Snitch last time we went against each other."

Kimball glared. "I mean it this time. No little disappointment is going to beat me twice."

Lily raised a brow. "What are you talking about?" she yelled back.

She heard a loud laugh. "Surely you know," Kimball yelled. "I mean, how could you not know that everyone in your family hates you?"

Lily turned and glared at him. "You mean like how can't get a girlfriend? I mean, how could you not know that every girl hates you?" she mocked.

Kimball glided closer, swaying a little with the wind. "Hey, at least my daddy loves me."

Lily felt an anger rush through her blood, and then she felt her fist smash into Mark Kimball's face. Then before Kimball could blink, or before she could hit him again, Lily flew off, getting far away from Kimball and his fat mouth.

"The Snitch, Lu! Get the Snitch!"

Lily turned her head to see the blurry figures of two players in green waving and pointing. Lily turned back around, and saw what they were barely seeing. That blurry smidgen of gold ahead of her. Lily zoomed after it, leaning close against her broom, going as fast as she could. She held her hand out, ready to snatch the little bit gold as soon as she got close enough.

"Is . . . , is that the Snitch?" Lily heard Meredith announce over the pounding rain.

Lily held her breath, hoping that Kimball wasn't close by. She soon felt a cool metal sliding across her palm. Lily closed her fingers, feeling a light wing fluttering against her fingers. Lily pulled her hand back to her and looked at the rapid wings of the Snitch.

A whistle blew, and the entire crowd grew silent. Unable to see what had happened, they waited in suspense to know what had happened.

"Slytherin wins!" Madam Hooch's voice rang out above the rain and thunder.

Lily tapped her quill against the desk softly. She was sitting in the History of Magic classroom, trying to take her end of the year exam. But a lot was on her mind, and it was hard to focus on the creation of the Knockback Jinx. She glanced to her left where Lola sat two seats away. Then to her right, Christian sat two seats away. Jace was two seats away from him. He was refusing to sit anywhere near Lola, and Lola refused to have him sitting anywhere near her.

Lily sneezed lightly. After winning the game, she had developed a slight cold. In her head, it was nothing to really worry about, so she never went to the Hospital Wing for it. But Lily didn't want to be

questioned by Madam Pomfrey. Kimball had been herded to the Hospital Wing, and he had tried to pin his bloodied nose on Lily. Thankfully for her, no one had believed him. No one had seen her hit him, not with the fog and stormy weather. When she had said this to Lola, she had replied with, "That's what happens when you play games in the cold and rain."

Lily tried to spend an equal amount of time with Lola and Jace during their 'separation'. And they understood and handled it well. When Lily was with Lola, Jace hung out with the other boys, just as when Lily was with Jace, Lola hung out with the other girls. But it was still an unspoken agreement that Lola and Jace be no where near each other. Not at meals, not during class, and not during breaks. They didn't say a word to each other, and when Lily was with them, they didn't say a thing about the other. She found it a bit aggravating, and she was waiting for it all to stop.

"Time is up," Professor Binns said dully. "Please bring your papers to the desk in the front, and leave in an orderly fashion."

Lily sighed, looking quickly over her answers as she walked to the front. They were all answered, and she prayed that they were all correct. She thought she was right. She placed her paper up front, and then went back to her seat, grabbing her things. She walked out, not stopping to wait for Jace or Lola. She didn't want to hear Jace complain at the moment, or hear Lola worry about her answers. She wasn't in the mood. She still had a load of tests to do, and it would be helpful if she could keep her eye on the prize . . . whatever the end prize was.

When Lily's last break came around, she was thrilled. Only one exam left, and it was potions. Plus she had time to rest her mind, which was aching terribly. Lily now felt pity for the fifth and seventh years. They had been taking tests for days now, not even halfway through the two week-long O.W.L. and N.E.W.T. tests. Yesterday, Lily had laughed when she heard that Molly had practically had a breakdown during a test, but now she felt a little bad for laughing. She was only taking a few tests, which were easy, while Molly was taking her O.W.L.s.

"How's it going, Lily Lu?"

Lily opened her eyes to see Scorpius coming to sit next to her on the couch. Lily was sitting backwards, her head laying off the couch. "It sucks," she muttered.

He laughed. "Tell me about it. As a fourth year they slam you with things to prep us for when the O.W.L.s plan to murder us."

Lily chuckled. "Imagine how the actual fifth years are feeling."

Scorpius grinned. "Yeah, Candice had a breakdown this morning."

Lily raised a brow. "Really? She's always so calm."

"Apparently not when it comes to Potions," he joked. Then Scorpius sighed. "So, are Jace and Lola still giving each other the cold shoulder?"

"Their shoulders are practically ice cubes now," Lily muttered dryly.

"When do you think it'll all be over?" Scorpius asked.

Lily sighed. "No idea, but I hope it's soon. This whole sharing time between them is getting tiring."

"Yeah. And it's odd not seeing you three together," he muttered.

"Scorpius!"

Both Lily and Scorpius jumped at the loud squeal. Lily cringed at the sound alone. Nikki Montana, a fourth year girl, plopped down on the couch next to Scorpius. Her dark hair fluttered around her shoulders in a whirlwind, and her grey eyes were bright. "I've been looking for you every where!"

Lily tried not to laugh at how irritated Scorpius looked at Nikki's presence. "And you didn't think to check our own common room?" he asked dryly. Lily held back another laugh.

Nikki didn't seem to notice the insult at her intelligence. "Don't you think the exams are really hard this year? I mean, it's not like we're fifth years or anything!"

Scorpius rolled his eyes. "Yeah, what sense does it make to be prepared for fifth year?"

Lily raised a brow. "Weren't you complaining that they were hard?"

"That it sucks, not that it wasn't necessary," Scorpius retorted with a grin.

Lily smiled, but didn't argue back.

"So, Scorpius, are you going to Hogsmeade this weekend? It's our last one of the year?" Nikki asked, practically bouncing in excitement.

Scorpius looked at her wearily. "Um . . . I haven't decided yet. Why do you ask?"

"Well . . . I was just wondering if you would like to go with me and my friends? It'll be a lot of fun," Nikki asked, her cheeks flushing a light pink.

Scorpius sighed and closed his eyes. Lily bit her lip, trying not to smile. Scorpius opened his eyes and looked at Nikki. "Sorry, but Lars asked me to stay and help with some Transfiguration practice. He said he didn't do very good on his exams."

Nikki looked a little upset. "Oh," she said, her voice quiet. "Well, maybe we can plan something for the summer."

Scorpius gulped. "Um . . . maybe. I'll see you later, Nikki."

"Bye, Scorpius!" she said, almost squealing, though she still looked unhappy. She stood up and left the two alone.

Lily finally laughed. "Well, aren't you the popular one!"

Scorpius ruffled his hair. "I'm sure she's a nice girl and all, but . . . Merlin, she's annoying!"

Lily giggled. "Give her a break. She can't control her loud and high voice, or her overly annoying personality," she mocked.

Scorpius grinned. "Well, she's a fellow Slytherin, so we've got to tolerate her."

"We may be snakes, but we know how to stick together," Lily said with a grin.

"I'm so nervous!" Lola said as she and Lily sat with the other girls at breakfast. "I can't believe we're getting our exam results today."

"I'm kind of worried," Shannon agreed. "I think I got pretty close to failing History of Magic. I hate that subject!"

"How do you think you did, Lily?" Izzy Bones asked.

Lily shrugged. "I think I did ok."

"Please, last time you got a perfect on every one," Lola retorted. Lily only shrugged back.

Suddenly rowdy laughter sounded close by. All the girls turned to see Jace, Christian, and Hunter walked by. Lola turned away quickly, staring coolly at her plate.

Megan sighed. "Are you still avoiding Jace?" she asked Lola.

"I'm not avoiding him. I just don't want to talk to him," Lola replied.

"Do you even remember what the stupid fight was about?" Shannon asked helplessly.

Lily watched as Lola looked up and thought and bit her lip.

"See, you can't!" Megan told her. "So why don't you just let it go?"

"Why do I have to end it? Why not him?" Lola argued.

"How about you both just quit!" Lily snapped back. "If I force him to let it go too, will you both just stop being difficult?"

Lola sniffed at Lily's mean tone. "I will if he will."

"Good!" Lily replied, getting up and storming over to where Jace was now sitting with the other boys. "Hey!" she greeted, a little forcefully.

Jace looked back at her. He grinned. "Oh, hey, Lil. You gunna sit with us?"

"Drop the fight with Lola," Lily demanded.

"What?" Jace questioned.

"I said, drop the fight with Lola. If you quit, she'll quit. So just say hi to her when you see her in class. Otherwise, I'll have to kill you. Now, see you in History of Magic." She turned and left the boys, and the left the Great Hall altogether. She really didn't want to go to class. It was their last day of classes really. And it was always boring. The professors talked about next year, how the tests were, and such and such. It sucked the year before, and Lily doubted that there would be a change.

"Hey, Lily Lu!"

Lily turned her head to see Mitch coming up from the dungeons.

"Hey, Mitch. Sleep in?" Lily asked with a laugh.

Mitch laughed too, running a hand through his blue locks. "Yeah, you could say that. Leaving early?"

"Yeah, I'm not that hungry," Lily replied.

"There you are, Mitch!"

Both Slytherins turned to see Miley coming out of the Great Hall.

Mitch grinned at her. "Oh, hey, Miley!"

"Where have you been? We were supposed to eat breakfast!" Miley complained.

Mitch sighed. "I was sleeping. My bad. How about you just watch me eat then, and I'll listen to you talk?"

Miley glared at him. "Why do I always have to be the one to talk? Why is it that when I ask you something, all I get is a grunt or one answer response?"

Lily looked at Mitch, but Mitch looked a little confused as well. "Umm . . . because I have nothing to really say about what you asked me?"

"Well maybe I have nothing to say then!" she snapped.

Mitch just raised a brow. "Well, then I can eat, and we'll sit in silence?"

"Why don't you just sit by yourself?" Miley exclaimed. She turned on her heel and stormed away.

Lily looked over at Mitch again. Mitch was staring at where Miley had been in confusion. Lily almost laughed. "Mitch, she wants you to chase after her."

Mitch looked at her. He sighed. "Man, I'm too tired for this." He started walking again, toward the Great Hall. He patted Lily's shoulder. "Later, Lil."

"Good luck, Mitch," Lily told him, walking toward the stairs. She made it to the History of Magic room without being stopped this time. She took a seat near the back.

"Good morning, Miss Putter," Professor Binns greeted.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Good morning, Professor."

Soon the room began to fill with Slytherins and Ravenclaws. Lola soon came in and took a seat next to Lily. A few minutes later, Jace sauntered in. He took a seat on her other side. "Hey, Lily." He looked over at Lola. "Hey, di- um . . . Lola."

Lily commended him for not calling her dirty this time.

Lola looked at him, as if she knew what he had wanted to say. "Good morning, Jace."

Lily sighed and smiled. Finally, they were getting somewhere.

"Once again, I passed every class," Jace said with a grin. The three were sitting in the Jace's dorm room. The others were all probably down in the common room, talking about their own results.

"You barely passed History of Magic. Again," Lola reminded.

"As did you," Jace retorted with another grin. "Besides, last time I got a seventy-two. This time you and I tied with seventy-fives."

"At least you're getting better," Lily encouraged.

"Coming from the girl who aced every one of them again, and got a hundred and twenty on Potions," Lola teased.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Just because I'm Slughorn's favorite."

"But you actually did the potion right," Lola replied.

"I'm proud of myself with that potion," Jace told them. "I actually did good. I got a ninety overall."

"That is good for you," Lily teased.

"Third year, here we come," Lola stated.

"We should celebrate!" Jace told them.

"How?" Lily asked.

Jace hummed in thought. "How about we go to the kitchens?"

"I am hungry," Lola agreed.

"Kitchens it is!" Lily laughed.

All three got up and left the dorm. But they were stopped by Raven.

"Hey, you three. Where are you going?" he asked.

"Kitchens," Lily told him.

"Celebrating your results?" Raven joked.

"You bet," Jace replied.

"How did your N.E.W.T.s go?" Lily asked. Today had been the last day of O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s.

"They weren't too bad," he told them. "I did good enough to do what I want."

"Which is?" Lola asked.

"I'm gunna be a Curse-Breaker. My chances are pretty good," Raven answered.

Lily smiled. "Well, hope you're right."

Raven grinned. "So do I. But, I'll let you three sneak out. If you think about it, bring me back something," he joked.

The three laughed as they went down into the common room. "I never knew that Raven would want to be a Curse-Breaker. I figured he'd want to be a Quidditch player," Lola said, still laughing a little.

Lily thought about the talk she'd had with Stacy in the locker room. "Yeah, but maybe it's better if he goes into Curse-Breaking. He might end up happier."

Chapter Seventeen: A Slytherin in Gryffindor Colors

Lily stretched as she waited for Lola to get dressed. The three had brought a bunch of food and drinks back to the common room, and back up to the boys' dorm room. They'd stayed in there until the other boys came to sleep, and then they moved back to the practically empty common room. They'd stayed up all night, celebrating their results, and unspokenly celebrating the end of Jace and Lola's fight. At the end of their night, they'd all stumbled up to bed, getting a total of one and a half-hour of sleep. Now, both girls were extremely tired, and almost wished to skip breakfast.

"Remind me, Lily. Why did we decide to stay up until the sun rose?" Lola mumbled tiredly.

"Because we were stupid enough to be proud of being smart," Lily said, a large yawn following.

"Think big ears got up?" Lola asked.

Lily shrugged. "Maybe, though Christian would have had to probably drag Jace out of his bed."

Lola scoffed. "Sounds like something he'd do."

Lola straightened up her robes, and then two girls trudged down the stairs, and down into the common room.

"Hey, wait up!" a groggy voice called out to them. Both girls turned to see Jace stumbling over to them. "I see I'm not the only tired one."

"You are. We're exhausted," Lily retorted. And to prove her point, she yawned again.

"Well, actually I think I'm almost dead," Lola replied, and the three began walking toward the door again.

"So, what's on the agenda today?" Jace asked with a large yawn of his own.

"Well, after we wake up a bit, I say that we hang outside. It looks to be a beautiful day, and I think we could use the fresh air," Lily suggested.

"Sounds fantastic," Lola said with a sigh. The three sat down at the Slytherin table, and immediately they all went toward coffee.

"You know, that stunts your growth, and you kids might need that."

Lily turned her head to see Lana and Scorpius coming to sit by them. "All I care about right now is staying awake," she replied.

"Long night?" Scorpius teased.

"And a short morning," Lola added.

"Ah! Here is Slytherin's famous trio of second years!" Professor Slughorn said cheerfully as he made his way toward them.

"Good morning, Professor," they all chimed.

Lily noticed the papers in his hands. "What have you got there, Professor?"

Professor Slughorn's lips stretched into a big smile. "These are for each of you second years. One for each." He handed them each a paper. "They're so you can pick out your electives for next year. And then there is your permission slip for Hogsmeade next year. Be sure to have your parents sign them."

"Thank you, Professor," Lily said, looking over her paper.

"So, what are you gunna take, Lil?" Jace asked as Slughorn walked away. He dropped his paper onto the table and began to pile food onto his plate.

Lily looked over her list. "Care of Magical Creatures for sure. But I'm not sure about my second one."

"Well, Muggle Studies isn't bad," Scorpius suggested.

"I think my grandfather is a better teacher," Lily joked.

"I've been taking Arithmacy and Ancient Ruins, and I haven't regretted," Lana contributed.

"If you want an easy elective," Lars said as he joined them, "I'd take Divination. If you know how to lie and make up gruesome stories, then you can easily pass. I've been doing it for two years now."

"That doesn't sound too bad," Lily murmured. Otherwise, her choices were Muggle Studies, Arithmacy, or Ancient Ruins. And none of those sounded too appealing.

"I might do that," Jace mumbled around a mouthful of food.

"What about you, Lola?" Scorpius asked.

"I think I'll take Arithmacy and Ancient Ruins. They sound more worthwhile," she answered.

"Way to be smart," Lana said with a laugh.

"Bite me," Lily and Jace muttered.

Lily stretched, sighing happily as she laid down on the grass. She was sitting in her grandparents' yard, just relaxing under the sun, her broom by her side. She was alone, and quite happy that way. Her father was at work, and Lily was sure that all the women in the family were at Shell Cottage, planning the upcoming wedding. So Lily had chosen to go to her grandparents' house. She knew her grandpa would be at work, and that she would be alone in their house, which sounded lovely. Regal was flying around the sky above, keeping close. Now, he was flying low, and landed next to her.

Lily stroked his feathers. "Oh, Regal, what a beautiful day."

Regal nipped cutely at her fingers. Lily had learned that it was a sign of his happiness.

"I can't wait for next year. New classes, and trips to Hogsmeade. You are going to get your new treats a lot faster," she teased. In honesty, Lily no longer felt odd talking to her owl, who couldn't really talk back. But he always seemed to know when she was happy or upset. He was better than any dog.

"I was told that I'd find you here."

Lily sat up quickly and turned her head to see Teddy walking toward her. Regal became startled, and fluttered up to rest on Lily's shoulder. Lily tried not to laugh. Teddy's hair was a reddish-pink, a sign of embarrassment.

"Hey, bro. What's up?" Lily asked. She didn't lay back down, not wanting to ruffle Regal.

"Well, we are at the guest list stage in the wedding preparations, so I wanted to talk to you," he answered. He sat down, and stroked Regal's head.

"Why me?" Lily asked, plucking out a few blades of grass.

"Well, I was wondering if you'd like me to put anyone down? A few friends to keep you company?" Teddy suggested.

Lily raised a brow. "You would really risk a fight at your wedding by inviting my friends?"

"No worries, the others would be killed on the spot if they started trouble," Teddy assured. "So, would you like me too?"

Lily smiled humbly. "Well, I would appreciate it."

Teddy laughed. "Ok, well, I plan on inviting the whole Malfoy family. After all, they are my family as well, no matter how distant. Now . . . you said you were friends with Mitch Avery, right?"

Lily nodded. "Yup, that I am."

Teddy nodded as well. "And I remember Lola . . . Pritchard?" Lily nodded. "Thought so. And . . . one of the Goyles? Right?"

"Lana and Lars actually," Lily told him. "And of course you can't forget Jace Pucey."

Teddy snapped his fingers. "That's what the other kid's name was."

Lily giggled. "Yeah, that's him. And he has no older siblings that you would know," she told him.

"Alright, so if you would please, make a list for me so I can give it to our personal planners, also known as your mother and aunts," Teddy told her. "That way they can send out the invites and set up the seating arrangement." He laid back and sighed, his hair turning purple. "I never thought a wedding would kill me."

"It's not going to kill you," Lily assured. "It's just going to tie you down and slap you around a bit."

Teddy gave a great big, fake smile. "Really? Oh! That's makes me feel so much better!" he said cheerfully.

Lily laughed, her shoulders shaking. Regal launched off her trembling shoulders, and began to circle above them. Now free, Lily laid back as well. She sighed in contentment. "I am glad that you're happy, Ted."

Teddy turned his head to look at her. He reached over and ruffled her hair. "Thanks. So, do I get to be glad that you're happy?"

Lily looked at him from the corner of her eye. Then she looked back at the sky, watching as a puffy white cloud floated over her. Then she looked at Teddy fully.

"You can be glad that I'm ok."

Lily stood in Madam Malkin's with distaste. All the girls who were taking part in the wedding were there, along with their mothers. That meant that it was Victoire, Dominique, Fleur, Rose, Hermione, Grandma Weasley, Lily's own mum, and herself. And they were trying on dresses. Something Lily really detested.

"So, what are the wedding colors?" Rose asked excitedly.

"We've decided with gold and silver. Gold for the girls and silver for the boys," Victoire answered. She was holding out a dress toward Dominique. "Here, sis. Try this one."

"Joy," Dominique said with a roll of her eyes. She took the gold colored dress and moved toward the changing room.

Lily grimaced. "Gold? Umm . . . how about something less . . . demoralizing on my part?"

Victoire tilted her head in curiosity. "What do you mean? What's wrong with that color?"

"Nothing really. I'd just rather wear something . . . less Gryffindor," Lily finally mumbled.

"Oh," Victoire murmured, biting her lip.

"Lily," Ginny whispered sternly.

Lily sighed. "But, whatever, it's fine. I'll live through it."

Victoire gave her a hesitant smile. "Well . . . if you're sure. Umm . . . why don't you try on this one?"

She handed Lily a dress. Lily took it, and moved toward the changing room. She chose a stall and locked it. Now, she looked at the dress.

It was a true Gryffindor gold, one that made her want to instinctively puke. The fabric was soft, comfy even she had to admit. The sleeves were short, and frilled, and it looked as if the skirt would end somewhere below her knees. It would have been pretty . . . if it weren't for the color. But Lily bared through it, and changed into it. Slowly, she opened the stall door, and looked out to where the other girls were.

"Aw, Dom, you look so pretty!" she heard Rose squealed.

"You do look beautiful, sweetie," her mum complimented.

Lily glanced out at Dominique. She did look pretty. Her gold dress was a bit darker, with a ribbon around the waist, thin straps, and the skirt was a little puffy. But all-in-all, it was pretty. Especially on Dom. Lily pulled in a deep breath, and stepped out into their sight.

"Oh! Lily, you look beautiful!" Victoire exclaimed.

Lily tried to smile, but it came out a bit forced.

"Well, now I'll let them fawn over you," Dominique said with a mocking grin. She walked back to the changing room.

"Now, we'll probably put your hair up," Fleur mentioned, sweeping Lily's hair up with her hands.

"That will look perfect," Hermione agreed.

"Do you like it?" Victoire asked.

Lily glanced at her mother, who was giving her a pleading look, already knowing how her daughter felt. Lily then looked at Victoire's hopeful face. She sighed, trying to seem as sincere as she could. "I like it, Victoire. It's perfect."

"It does look pretty, despite the horrid color," Lola commented, sitting on the bed next to the dress. Lily had invited her over a day after receiving the dress.

"I didn't say the style sucked," Lily muttered, sitting at her desk. "It's just . . . the color is so . . ."

"Gryffindor?"

"So everything that I'm not! I mean, I'm not a Gryffindor, but . . . that dress really makes it look like I am . . . and, maybe I'm being childish about it, but . . ."

"It's not childish, it's you, something this dress is not," Lola assured. "Why don't you just tell your cousin that you don't like it?"

"Because you didn't see how happy they all were!" Lily replied, dropping her head onto her desk. "They all looked so happy just to see me in that freaking dress! How can I tell them that I don't like it?"

"You just be honest, and tell them that you don't think the dress suits you," Lola replied. "And if that doesn't work you can spill something on it and blame it on one of your brothers. Kill two birds with one stone, as they say."

Lily grinned, and both girls had a sparkle in their eyes. "You know, you took the idea right out of my head."

Lola giggled. "Great Slytherins think alike."

But days later, Lily couldn't bring herself to ruin the dress. Not because she didn't want to discredit her brothers, but she didn't want to see the disappointed look that Victoire might give.

"You've got a letter, princess," Harry said, holding a letter out to Lily at the breakfast table. Lily took the letter and opened it. It was from Scorpius.

"Hey, Lily Luna,

Tell Teddy thanks for the personal invite to his wedding. My parents were really happy to receive theirs. My grandmother was ecstatic. Honestly, I can't wait to go either. From what I hear, it's a chance to hang out with you, Mitch, and Lana and Lars. I was told they were also invited. So, my guess is that Lola and Jace will be there as well, and my other guess is that you have something to do with that.

I was also told that you will be taking part in the wedding ceremony. I can't wait to see that. No offense, Lu.

Anyways, a few of us are going to hang out at Diagon Alley on the third, and we were wondering if you'd like to join us? If so, send a letter, or just meet us at the Leaky Cauldron. Hope come.

Sincerely,

Scorpius."

Lily smiled at the letter. The idea of getting away from her family and the wedding plans sounded fantastic.

"What's the snake got to say?" James said with a sneer.

"James," Ginny warned, her voice stern.

But Lily ignored him. "Dad, may I go hang out with a few friends in Diagon Alley on the third?"

"What friends?" he asked.

"Scorpius, Lana, and Mitch," Lily answered. She knew that Lana and Mitch hadn't been mentioned, but she was sure they would be there.

"It's fine with me. I'm sure you need a break from the wedding plans anyways," Harry joked.

Lily smiled, loving how her father always understood. "Thanks, Daddy."

"So, are we going to see Scorpius at the wedding? Teddy told us that he invited the Malfoys?" Ginny asked.

"What?" Albus and James exclaimed.

Lily looked at her brother from the corner of her eye, and bit back a smug grin. Then she looked back at her mother. "Yeah, they'll be there."

"And the others that Teddy put on the guest list? The ones that were invited without their families?" Ginny asked teasingly.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Teddy offered, and I took the chance. That way I won't be completely bored at the reception. But, Lola is going, Lana, Lars, and Mitch are going, and I'm pretty sure that Jace wouldn't miss it."

"Teddy invited the Goyles?" Albus protested.

"An Avery and a Pritchard?" James said with disgust.

Lily gave her brothers a dry look. "I heard he invited Elisa Ogbourne. I could gag," she retorted. James glared fiercely.

"Children," Ginny warned again.

But Lily didn't back down from the glaring contest. She had learned that the girl that had been with James during their last fight was Elisa, who was a year above James. And Lily had also learned that she was nothing more than an attention whore. And when you want attention, you go for a Potter, who gathered all the attention. And James was one to grab all the attention he could. Two of a kind, Lily thought.

Lily sat in at the Leaky Cauldron counter, drinking a butterbeer. She was earlier than when Scorpius said they were all meeting there, but she needed to get out of the house. James wasn't working, so he had a few friends over, and Albus had brought over Tyler. The last thing she wanted was to be stuck in a house with them longer than she needed to be.

"So, Lily, can I get you something to eat?" Hannah asked, stopping to stand in front of her behind the counter.

"Nah., I'm just waiting for a few people," Lily told her.

"Like me?"

Lily turned her head to see Scorpius walking toward her. He sat on the stool next to her. Lily smiled at him. "Hey, Scorp. What's up?"

He smirked. "Nothing much. I needed to get outta the house, so I helped plan a day to hang out." His smirk grew as he eyed her. "And what kinda fun would we have without Slytherin's own princess?"

Lily rolled her eyes, but she didn't hide her smile. "Well, thanks for the invite. So, who's all coming?"

"The Goyles, Mitch, Dante, Adrian, Will, Raven, Melina, Stacy, Wade, Amanda, and Tamara," Scorpius listed.

Lily pictured the faces of every name. "So . . . that means I'm the youngest one?"

He grinned. "Yep, that would be correct. Um . . . hey, miss?"

Hannah came back over to the two of them. "Yes?" she asked, a small smile on her face. Lily was sure she was flattered by the title 'miss'.

"Um, could I get a butterbeer please?" Scorpius asked kindly.

Hannah smiled and pulled a bottle out from under the counter. She took off the cap and set it on the counter. "Here you are. On me."

Scorpius raised a brow. "Really?"

"For any friend of Lily's," Hannah said with another smile as she turned to a different customer.

Lily smiled at Scorpius's victorious grin. He looked back at her. "Man, I love you."

She laughed. "Anything for a friend of mine." Lily took a drink of her own. "So, why did you want out of the house?"

"My grandfather is all over me, trying to get me to skip the wedding, to take a summer job that one of his friends offered me," he muttered.

"You gunna take the job at least?" Lily asked.

Scorpius shook his head. "No. The money's not even worth it. Besides, I have enough of my own money. I don't need to work this summer."

"Trust fund baby?" Lily teased.

Scorpius rolled his eyes. "Well, I guess you could say that. My parents set something up to keep me settled for life. But I don't wanna dip into it after I graduate, so I figured that I would just use it while I'm in school."

"Why not save it for after school?" Lily asked.

"I wanna be able to support myself after school," he replied, taking a sip of his drink. "Be independent and all that jazz."

Lily gave a shrug. "I guess that makes sense."

"Hey, looks like the best part of the party is already here!" Lily grinned at the sound of Mitch's voice. She turned and received a shock.

It was Mitch, but quite a bit different. He had his left ear pierced three times, a stud, and then two small hoops near the top. And his lip was pierced as well. And coming out from his sleeve seemed to be a tattoo of some figure she couldn't completely see.

Lily grinned at him. "Oh my, Mitch, what did you do?"

Mitch laughed. "You like?" He pulled his sleeve up for her to see. "I got a snake too."

Soon the three were joined by all the others. The two Nott siblings arrived arguing, not that anyone was surprised. Lily never saw Tamera and Will together without them arguing. The Goyle twins came, and Lars looked dead tired. They all decided to grab a table and eat before they left.

"So, what your guys' plan now that you've graduated?" Dante asked Stacy and Raven with a grin.

"What do you mean?" Raven asked, taking a bite from his plate.

"You gunna live together?" Adrian hinted.

Raven raised a brow. "We already do. Since almost two weeks ago."

"Woo! Go, Rave!" Dante joked, and he and Adrian high-fived. The rest of the guys laughed, while the girls rolled their eyes. Stacy just gave the boys a disgruntled look, while Raven looked as if he were suppressing a smug look.

Lily decided to save him. "So, while we're on this subject, do you have a girlfriend yet, Dante? Or are girls still running for the hills?"

The others laughed, but Dante just gave a dry laugh. "Oh, yes, that was just so funny!"

Then Mitch slammed his hand down on the table. "I have a romance announcement!" he exclaimed.

"For the last time, Mitch, I will not go out with you!" Scorpius joked. Again, they all laughed.

Mitch gave a pout. "Don't you love me, Scor? After all the nights we've shared?" Lily almost choked on her drink as she laughed.

"Just go on, Mitch," Lana prodded.

Both Scorpius and Mitch laughed. But Mitch sat up proudly. "I just want to say, that I, am now a man!"

The girls all groaned, in disgust and annoyance. The guys all cheered and hooted.

Raven raised his butterbeer. "A toast. To the loss of Mitch's virginity!"

"To the loss of Mitch's virginity!" the guys cheered.

Lana looked over at Lily. "I feel bad for the girl who pitied him." Lily bit back a laugh.

Adrian seemed to have heard them. "Yeah, who was the girl, Mitch?"

Mitch's already smug grin grew twice its normal size. "Trixie Kimball, Marky's little sister!"

To that, they all cheered.

Chapter Eighteen: Boys Are Gross . . . Right?

Lily yawned, her eyes drooping as she laid face down on the couch at the Burrow. This was it. The day Lily had been waiting to pass. Teddy and Victoire's wedding. It had finally come, and Lily couldn't have been more thankful. She was tired of listening to wedding plans, and now that the day had come, all that was left was fussing over the wedding, the actual ceremony, and then the reception. Then it would all be over.

The adults were setting the last few things up in the backyard. Her aunt Fleur's parents had arrived, along with her sister's family. Lily didn't talk to her distant cousins, mainly because they rarely spoke English, and Lily knew very little French. But they were all pretty, the veela genes in them prominent, although Lily thought that they couldn't hold a candle to Victoire, Dominique, or Louis.

Lily sighed. She knew that soon her mum would usher her upstairs with the rest of the girls so that they could all change, and then they would fix her up. After all, since she was part of the ceremony, she had to be 'presentable' as her mother had said. The guests were expected to arrive in a few hours, and the boys would be seating them. All of Lily's better friends were coming. She'd received letters from each of them, as did Teddy. Jace had written that he was glad to be out of the house. Apparently he thought that being an only child was dreadfully boring.

"Tired, Little L?"

Lily turned her head so that she could see her uncle Charlie sitting in the chair across from her.

"Dead tired. Aren't you supposed to help set things up outside?" Lily asked, trying to suppress another oncoming yawn. She failed.

"We're practically done. The others are just fixing up a few things. Also, it's a bit hot outside, and I wanted to get out of the heat," he explained. "Thankfully it's supposed to cool by the time the reception starts."

Lily closed her eyes and rolled onto her back. "Yeah, if I'm wearing gold, I'd rather not die in it."

She heard him give a laugh. "You don't like gold?"

"I'm not its biggest fan," she admitted. "But Victoire likes it, and it's her wedding."

"Oh, you are a saint, Little L," Charlie complimented. Lily almost scoffed aloud. She was no where near a saint.

"Lily? Come on, you girls need to get ready," she heard her mother call from upstairs.

Lily bit her lip to keep from groaning out loud. She opened her eyes and looked at her uncle, who was grinning broadly. "Well, good luck, Little L."

Lily sighed as she slowly got up from the couch. "Yeah, thanks." She left the living room and trudged up the stairs, not at all enthusiastic about getting ready. She felt like she was on her way to Azkaban. But as she made her way to her uncle Percy's old room, where the three girls were supposed to change, she saw Teddy making his way down the hall.

"Hey, sis, you're wearing a different dress today," he commented.

Lily looked at him, hoping rising inside her. "Really? Why?"

"Well, Vic and I decided to go with a different dress design. Something more you," Teddy told her. And then he ruffled her hair as he stood next to her. "So, go get dressed. Then your mum and aunts can torture you with all kinds of hair and makeup devices." Then he continued to make his way down the hall.

Lily rolled her eyes at her retreating brother's back, but she turned into her uncle's room. Rose and Dominique were already in there, each unzipping the bag with their dress in it. They both looked up at Lily's entrance. Rose said nothing and looked back down at her own dress. But Dominique spoke.

"Your dress is hanging in the closet still. The shoes are in the box"

"Thanks," Lily said quietly. There was a tension in the room, and she felt that something would snap if she spoke too loud. She moved over to the closet and pulled out the bag. She dropped in onto the

bed, and unzipped it. She was shocked by what she saw.

Inside was a vibrant green, thin strapped dress made of a silky material. There was a silvery sash near the waist, and the skirt looked as if it would simply fall around her legs, probably ending near her knees. When Lily opened the box, she found small heels, also an emerald green color. The dress had attracted the attention of the other girls as well.

"Teddy must have grabbed the wrong dress. We're supposed to be wearing gold," Rose said matter-of-factly.

"He said that he and Vic picked out a new one for me," Lily said, not able to contain her happy smile.

"But that's not even the right color for the wedding!" Rose protested.

"Silver is part of the wedding," Dominique argued.

"The boys are wearing silver!"

"How about you just shut your mouth for once, Rose!" Lily snapped. "It's Victoire's wedding, so how about we let her freaking choose!"

"She had picked out a different dress at the shop!" Rose snapped back.

Lily gritted her teeth. She zipped the bag up and picked up, and then headed for the door.

"Where are you going?" Rose demanded.

"Away from your overly loud mouth!" Lily sneered. She stormed out of the room, and made her way up to the next flight, and went into her uncle Ron's room. In there she started to change. There was thankfully no zipper to this dress, and no fastenings. All she had to do was slip it over her head, put on the shoes and then get herself settled. The shoes, she was happy to see, fit well and didn't make her feel like she'd fall. Once she felt satisfied, Lily left the room, and went back down the stairs and into her mother's old room. There, the women were all helping Victoire get ready. Lily looked at her cousin before announcing her arrival. Victoire looked beautiful. Her

dress was pure white, and the style was old-fashioned. It all made her seem so . . . elegant and regal. Fleur was helping her work on her hair, along with the help of Hermione.

Lily got ready to speak, but then Victoire saw her in the mirror.

"Oh, Lily, that looks perfect!" Victoire squealed.

This caught the attention of all the women in the room, who immediately looked toward Lily. They all began talking of the dress.

"Oh, Lily, that looks stunning on you!"

"You look so grown up!"

"It's beautiful, sweetheart."

Victoire got up from her chair and walked toward Lily, being careful with her own dress. "Teddy was right, green does look much better on you."

Lily gave a sheepish smile. "You didn't have to change the dress. It does kinda screw up your whole color scheme."

Victoire smiled. "I'd rather have you be comfortable and beautiful than have a perfect colored wedding. Besides, you do have some silver, which is one of the colors."

Lily did her best not to laugh, thinking of Rose's protests.

"Alright, Lily, come over here, and me and Angelina will fix you up," her mother told her, herding her toward a different chair. Lily bit back her disgust as her mum and aunt Angeline began speaking of different makeup ideas. Although, she was thankful when she heard the words 'not a lot' and 'minimal'. Then she felt her mother's fingers in her hair, and she saw her aunt coming at her face with something. She did her best not to flinch at their touches. Soon Dominique and Rose came in, and soon they each had people fussing over them as well. Lily caught Rose glaring at her twice, and each time Lily just grinned smugly at her. It only made Rose's glare darker.

Lily was finished first. "Alright, we're done, Lily," her mum announced. She took Lily's hand and pulled her up from the chair.

Then she led her to the large mirror they had bought for this particular day. Lily looked at herself, and wondered what they had done to make her seem this way.

She looked older than twelve, older than thirteen even. Her hair was up with a silver ribbon, yet not childishly like she would have thought. The dress flowed gently down to the bottom of her knees, the color radiant against her pale and fair skin. Her eyelashes were darker it seemed, and her lips were a light red. And to put it all together, there was a pink tint on her cheeks, and she knew that it wasn't makeup.

"You looked beautiful, hun," her mum whispered.

Lily felt and watched as her cheeks got even hotter. "Thanks, Mum." Lily took in a gulp. "So, how is this whole thing going to work out?"

"We've decided that you'll go out in pairs, boy and girl," Victoire told her.

Lily felt her muscles tense and her nerves go numb. Boy and girl. That meant she had to go with one of the groomsmen. And that meant that she was walking with James or Albus. It took all of her strength to ask, "So, who am I walking with?"

"We've decided to go oldest to youngest, so that puts you with Albus," Hermione told her.

Now Lily felt even sicker. She'd have rather had James than Albus. She and James may be more verbal in their fight, but the tension was always thicker and sharper with Albus. "Sounds good," Lily mumbled. "Um, I'm going to go get a drink of water." Lily left the room before she could hear another word, and moved quickly down the stairs. Thankfully the shoes didn't hinder her steps. She met no one in the sitting room, but her father and uncle Ron were in the kitchen. Her uncle Ron teasingly whistled.

Lily felt her cheeks heat again. "Very nice, Uncle Ron."

Ron chuckled. Harry went over and placed his hands on his daughter's shoulders. "Well, you sound like my daughter, but you don't look a thing like her. She's only twelve."

Lily rolled her eyes. "Very funny, Daddy."

Harry grinned. Then he leaned down and kissed her forehead. "You're beautiful, princess."

"Thanks," Lily whispered.

"Are the girls almost done?" Ron asked, taking a drink from his glass. The liquid seemed amber, making Lily wonder what it was.

"I think so. It seemed like all Victoire had left was a bit of makeup, and same with Rose and Dominique," Lily answered, getting herself a glass of water.

She saw her uncle grimace out of the corner of her eye. "I'd better be able to recognize my daughter," he muttered. Lily bit her lip to keep from giggling.

"Oh, Ron, you worry," Harry laughed.

"Yeah, but I'm right to. Rose is fifteen now, and we both know how fifteen-year-old boys think," Ron insisted.

Lily turned and looked at her father, waiting to see his response. Harry shook his head and laughed. "Ron, neither you nor Hermione dated when you were fifteen," he assured.

Ron seemed to look a little subdued at his words. Lily couldn't help it. "But, didn't Aunt Hermione date that Quidditch player in her fourth year?" she asked innocently.

"See!" Ron exclaimed.

Harry rolled his eyes, and smiled at his daughter. "Thank you for reminding us, princess."

Lily smiled. "It was no problem, Daddy." She finished her drink and put her cup in the sink, leaving the room afterwards.

All too soon, the time came for the ceremony to begin. The girls and the boys all waited around the door. Lily looked to see Teddy and her father, his best man, waiting. Lily glanced sideways at Albus, who looked disgruntled. The two were standing side-by-side, yet they did not touch at all. Not even one skin tissue touched one

another. But when it was their turn to follow James and Rose, they both smiled slightly, trying to ignore the large amount of tension in the air around them. It was like they were inside a bubble, the tension only touching them, and they both waited for it to pop. But they made it to the altar with no glares or muttered words. But when they turned to each other, Lily saw the hostility inside his eyes, and she could feel his urge to glare. Lily in turn felt sick and angry. She wanted to throw up and glare at the same time. But she didn't. She kept smiling as they turned away from each other and took their places.

Lily looked out into the crowd, thankfully finding very familiar faces. When she found the Malfoys in the audience, she locked eyes with Scorpius. He was smirking at her, and Lily tried not to giggle. She watched as his shoulders shook with a silent chuckle of his own. His stormy eyes were alright, pretty even. And Lily liked that he hadn't slicked his hair back to look formal, but instead allowed his blonde fringe touched his eyebrows in a mess. His robes were very nice, deep green with a sliver lining and cuffs. He looked very . . . handsome, Lily thought. Then she blushed, and hurriedly looked away.

The ceremony ended beautifully, with no problems at all. Victoire had looked absolutely beautiful, and Teddy hadn't taken his eyes off of her. Lily smiled honestly as the ceremony went on, and she clapped and cheered just as everyone else did when they ended it with a kiss. The reception started, and Lily immediately moved to a table, sitting down, no longer wanting to stand.

Hands soon covered her vision. "Guess who."

Lily grinned at the sound of Scorpius's voice. "Hmm . . . well, that nasally sound makes me think that it's . . . Albus?" she teased.

There was a gasp of dismay behind her. The hands retracted, and Scorpius came to sit in front of her. He moved his hand over his heart. "Ow, Lily Lu. I think you've broken it."

Lily giggled and rolled her eyes. "Oh, my apologies. Do you need your mommy to kiss it better?"

"Well, she's not here right now, so would you do it instead?" he teased back. Lily knew it was a joke, but she still blushed lightly.

"How did you like the wedding?" Lily asked.

"It was nice, normal," Scorpius answered. "I think the best part was seeing you standing up there awkwardly."

Lily nudged roughly at his foot. "Shut up," she muttered.

Scorpius smiled slightly. "They look happy." Lily raised a brow, and he nodded toward the dance floor. Lily looked back to see that Teddy and Victoire were dancing while everyone else watched.

"Yeah, they are," she replied. She sighed and looked back at her table companion. "So, how was Lucius when your family left?"

"Very furious, threw a major tantrum. It was quite funny, actually," Scorpius laughed. "And, how were your brothers when they realized that my family would be here?"

"Pissy, and the also threw a fit. And that too was pretty funny," Lily said. "So, who seated you and your family?"

Scorpius smirked. "Alas, it was not one of your brothers. Your cousin Louis did it. Nice kid, by the way."

"No doubt. Louis doesn't have a mean bone in his body. He's always been the nice and humble one of us all," Lily replied.

"Makes me wonder why he's not a Hufflepuff," Scorpius joked.

"His sister was," Lily said, referring to Victoire.

"With how sweet she is, that is no surprise," he told her. "I mean, I've only met her once, but she was very nice, polite, and such."

"Surprise, surprise," Lily mumbled. But she still smiled.

"Ah, Lily! You looked beautiful up there!"

Both Lily and Scorpius looked over to see Lana, Lola, Lars, and Jace coming toward them. Lily stood up and hugged Lola.

"So, you did trash the dress?" Lola asked.

Lily giggled. "No, Teddy and Victoire got me a different one. One that suits me better."

"Well it's a lot better than that gold crap that the other girls were wearing," Lars complimented.

Lana rolled her eyes at her brother. "What a way to say she was pretty." She looked at Lily. "You do look great in green, though."

Lily smiled. "Yeah, I think so too."

"Don't those shoes kill your feet?" Jace asked with an unsure look toward her feet.

Lily looked at her shoes. "Actually, they aren't bad. They're actually kinda comfortable."

"Ah, children, you are here!"

They all turned to see Teddy coming over. Lily smiled at him. "Hey, Teddy. Happy it's over?"

"Immensely," he said with a laugh. "But I have some bad news for you."

Lily looked at him hesitantly. "What is it?"

"Well, all the women, and Victoire, want to have all of the cousins dancing at the same time for a picture, or hundred of them. And of course for their amusement," Teddy told her.

Lily groaned. "What? Why would they do that to me?"

Teddy shrugged apologetically. "Sorry, sis. You've got less than twenty minutes before they start hunting for us all." He reached his hand up, but stopped. Then he grinned. "If I touched your hair, I might be maimed."

They all laughed. Teddy gave a small word of leaving before he walked off. Jace looked at Lily. "I like him."

Lily rolled her eyes. "It's hard not too." Then something dawned on her. "Hey, where's Mitch?"

"I was just thinking that," Lana spoke.

"I saw him in the crowd," Lily replied.

"And he arrived with us," Scorpius threw in. They all began looking around the large backyard for electric blue hair.

"Oh, wait. I think I see him," Lars said, pointing over to a far table.

They all looked, and Lily immediately recognized him . . . talking with Dominique. "Oh, boy. That's a disaster waiting to happen," she muttered. "Two dangerous forces are talking."

"Looks like Dominique's got her dance partner picked," Lana said with a laugh. They all watched at the obvious flirting going on between the two in the distance.

"Oh, Lily, you look absolutely beautiful!" Astoria gushed as she and Draco approached the group of teens.

Lily's cheeks flushed a little. "Thank you, Mrs. Malfoy."

"Hello, Miss Potter," Draco greeted with a nod.

Lily grinned. "Hello, Mr. Malfoy. Enjoy the wedding?"

"It's not bad actually. In fact I never knew how much I missed your uncle Ron throwing glares my way," he commented.

Lily laughed. "Just ignore him. He's just being difficult and old-fashioned."

"Well to be fair, I sent a few back at him," Draco joked. Then he looked out at where Teddy and Victoire were standing. "So, I'm assuming by the gathering of the younger generation that they'll be looking for you soon, Lily?"

Lily looked over too and saw the other cousins moving toward Victoire and Teddy, each with a partner. She grimaced. "Yeah, the women in my family are demanding that all of us young ones have a

dance so that they can take pictures to scar us for years to come," she explained.

Draco laughed. "So, who are you going to be dancing with?"

"Nobody, if I can get away with it," she muttered.

"Well, Scorpius, why don't you be Lily's dance partner?" Astoria suggested.

Lily blushed a little at the thought, and Scorpius cleared his throat. The others all giggled and smirked. But Scorpius smirked as well. "Well, I don't see why not. I would love to be a gentleman and dance with Lily Lu."

Lily watched as he glanced at where she was sure her brothers were standing. She grinned as well. "I'd be honored as well," Lily told him.

Scorpius's smirk turned smug as he held his arm out. Lily took it, trying to fight back a blush, and they both started toward where the rest of the cousins were gathering. Teddy caught sight of them first, thankfully.

"Ah, here's Lil. I told you she'd show up willingly," Teddy told them. The rest of them turned to see her and Scorpius coming their way. No one there seemed at all happy except for Teddy, Victoire, Dominique, . . . and Mitch!

"Ah, Mitch, you've been chosen to die a little on the inside too," Lily commented with a laugh.

Mitch grinned and ran a hand through his blue locks. "Yeah. Dominique asked me, and how could I refuse such a pretty girl?" he said, grinning toward Dominique, who only looked smug and elated.

Scorpius smirked. "I'm sure that the others will thoroughly enjoy having us dance with the girls," he joked.

"Oh course, how could they not?" Mitch laughed. Lily and Scorpius laughed as well.

"Ok, you three, come on over," Teddy said with a wave. As the three approached, Teddy spoke again. "Alright, the adults want a nice dance with us all, so let's keep it appropriate," he teased.

"Yeah, Teddy," Lily accused with a grin.

Teddy chuckled. "Alright, so spread out, and let's do this," he told them. Lily and Scorpius moved farther to the left, away from the others, yet not far from Mitch and Dominique.

"You know how to dance, Lily Luna?" Scorpius asked with a grin.

Lily rolled her eyes. "I know the basics, yes," she retorted.

His grin got bigger. "Well, then this will be the perfect time to learn even more." He took her hand, and placed one at her waist. Lily put her other hand on his shoulder. The music started, thankfully an even paced song, and each pair began to move. Lily had to give Scorpius credit. He was good, not even looking a bit worried.

"Ok, I'm going to twirl you," he muttered softly. Before Lily could protest, he was raising her arm, and she was spinning in a slow and graceful circle. Then she was facing him again, and her head only spinning slightly.

"That was unnecessary," she muttered to him.

Scorpius smirked. "Please, it was flawless, and you looked beautiful doing it, so don't complain."

Lily felt her cheeks flare with heat at his words, and she averted her eyes briefly from his. But then she looked back, noticing that his eyes were much prettier up close. And she liked the way his hair felt just above them. It was a nice contrast.

"You know, Lil," Lily almost jumped at the sound of his voice, "I think that your brothers are having troubles focusing on their dancing," he mumbled.

Lily only slightly glanced at her brothers, who were throwing glares in their direction. She found herself endlessly embarrassed. She had been admiring one of her best friends! She had been checking out Scorpius! Lily felt her cheeks flush again. There was a flash of light,

and both Lily and Scorpius looked to see Lily's grandma holding a camera and smiling at the two. Scorpius chuckled, but Lily felt her cheeks turn even pinker.

"Is that your grandmother?" Scorpius asked.

Lily nodded. "Yeah, that's her. And now that she had a camera, none of us are safe," she joked. Scorpius chuckled, and Lily felt the rumble of his laugh through her hand on his shoulder. She noticed then how much deeper his voice was than it had been before. Had she really not noticed until now? Lily mentally shook herself. Why would she care? He was only her friend . . . and it would always be that way.

Lily had been right. No cute moment was safe from her grandmother with a camera. Every moment was captured, even after the dance. Lily, Scorpius, and Mitch had all been razed by the others when the dance had ended, but they only laughed and joked with the others. Soon night began to fall, and candles began to float and light up the entire backyard. A few of her friends had to leave, Jace and Lola, and then the twins. But Mitch stayed, preoccupied with Dominique, and Scorpius and his family had of course stayed.

Lily found that she had a moment to escape the large crowd of people, and took it, making her way into the living room of the Burrow. She laid back on the couch, not caring about her dress at the moment. She kicked off her shoes and closed her eyes.

"Hiding in the dark?"

Lily jumped. She sat up and looked at the source of the voice. By the light from the candles coming through the windows, she could see the dim features of Lysander standing in the doorway.

"What are you doing in here?" she asked.

"I saw you sneak out, so I thought I'd follow ya. Unless you just wanna be alone?" he hesitated, waiting for an answer before he moved.

Lily couldn't help but smile. "No, it's alright. Come in."

Lysander walked closer, and sat on the arm of the couch. "So, hiding out?"

"Pretty much. Just getting away from the noise," she sighed. She looked up at him. He looked so much different from when she had last talked to him. He looked much taller, at least a head taller than her. And his was no longer skinny, but leaned and toned. His blonde hair was just as unruly, but it was shorter, no longer falling into his eyes. The only thing that was the same were his eyes, with that dreamy look to them. Noticing all these changes, Lily kind of wished that she had paid more attention to Lysander, then this wouldn't have been such a shock.

"Yeah, I can understand that. They are getting kinda crazy out there," he chuckled.

"Is that why you came in here?" Lily asked.

Lysander looked at her with a small grin. "No. I just thought I'd come and talk to you. I haven't in a while. I kinda wish that I had."

A blush spread across Lily's cheeks. "Yeah, I wish I had too."

A silence formed around them, and Lily wished desperately to fill it. But she didn't know what to say.

"Say, Lily," Lysander spoke. Lily detected a blush of his own on his cheeks, "um, I was wondering something . . ."

Lily raised a brow as he trailed off. "Yes? What?"

Lysander cleared his throat, and then scratched at the back of his head. "Well, I was wondering if you'd want to go to Diagon Alley with me sometime?" Lily blushed heavily. "You, k-know, to catch up," Lysander finished, his own cheeks a deep red.

Lily found herself speechless, and her face very flushed and warm. But finally she was able to smile and stutter out a response. "Y-yeah! Sure, I'd love that, Ly," she assured.

Lysander's face had relief written all over it. He smiled too. "Oh, good. I'm glad. Um, how about the day after tomorrow?"

Lily made a sound that seemed like a mix of a sigh and a giggle. She tried not to blush. "That's sounds perfect!" Lily mentally slapped herself. She sounded like an idiot!

"Hey, you two!"

Both Lily and Lysander jumped in surprise, and their heads whipped toward the doorway. Harry was standing in the dim lighting, looking at the two kids with a smile. "Come on, out. Grandma Weasley's been picture hunting, and you know she'll want some of you two." He turned and began to walk out. But when he heard no one following, he looked back at them. "Don't make me go get little Molly."

Both of them popped out of their seats, and made their way toward the door. Lily slipped on her shoes, and Lysander waited. Harry chuckled as he kept walking.

"That's a dirty trick," Lily muttered at her father's back.

"He knows how to torture," Lysander agreed.

They both stepped back out into the bright light of the reception, blinking a few times. "Hey, Lil!" They both turned to see Louis coming toward them.

Lily smiled, hoping she wasn't still blushing. "Hey, Louis. What's up?"

"The Malfoy's are getting ready to leave, so if you wanna say goodbye to your friend, I'd hurry."

Lily scanned the crowd, and easily found the family of blondes standing, talking to her father and Teddy. "Yeah, I'll do that now." She looked at Lysander. "I'll see ya in a bit."

Lysander nodded with a smile. "Yeah, and if not, then at the Leaky Cauldron."

Lily smiled back. "Yeah, for sure." With a simple wave, Lily left the boys, and began to make her way over to the Malfoys. She took a glance back at where she had left Lysander. She blushed when she saw that Lysander's eyes were on her as well.

She had never been so excited to go to Diagon Alley.

Chapter Nineteen: Who Said Summer School Wasn't Fun?

Lily blinked as the sunlight poured in through her window. She sat up in her bed and stretched out her arms. Then she smiled. It had just begun, but it already felt like a wonderful morning. She threw off her covers, and skipped into her bathroom to get ready for her day.

The wedding had been almost a week ago, and ever since her day with Lysander two days later, Lily couldn't stop smiling. It had been the best day of her summer. They'd had so much fun, and ever since, Lysander had been sending letters to her, and she sent letters back. She would never admit it, but her heart fluttered with every letter. She couldn't wait to see him again!

"Good morning, princess," Harry greeted when Lily sat at the kitchen table.

"Morning, Daddy," Lily greeted back. She grabbed the cereal box on the table, noticing the absence of her mother. "Where's Mum?"

"She's in the study. She's working on an emergency article for the Prophet," Harry replied, reading his own morning copy of the paper. "Your brothers are out as well. James had to work, and I guess that Albus is going to see if George can give him a job."

Lily almost rolled her eyes. Like she cared about her brothers. She poured milk into her cereal, and then took her first bite. "So, what have you got planned for today?" she asked.

"Oh, same as always. Work, filing, paperwork, reading reports, so on and so on," Harry said with a smile. "How about you, sweetheart?"

Lily shrugged. "I don't know. I'll figure out something to do with my day."

"Well you could always go do work for me," Harry joked.

Lily giggled. "Yeah, I love paperwork," she said with sarcasm. Harry laughed too. Lily sighed. What would she do? She could always go upstairs and fiddle around with her potion kit. That was always fun. In fact, that sounded perfect for a quiet day. So she finished her bowl, put it in the sink, and then hurried upstairs. She pulled the

potion book that Slughorn had given her out from her bookshelf. She closed her eyes, and then randomly opened a page. Elixir to Induce Euphoria. Lily looked over the needed ingredients. She had some, but she was missing the wormwood. She didn't have enough, not to mention she was missing the castor beans.

Lily sighed and closed the book. She wrote down a list of what she needed, and then stuck it in the book. Then she grabbed the tiny bag off of her desk, and stuck the book inside. Just incase she decided to make another potion she could then look up what she'd need. Then she grabbed the small case with her money in it, and put it in the bag as well. She ran down the stairs, checking to see if her father was still in the kitchen. Thankfully, he was still reading the paper.

"Hey, Daddy, I'm going to go to Diagon Alley. I need to buy a few things," Lily told him.

Harry glanced up at her. "Ok, sweetheart. I'll tell your mum."

"Thanks, Dad," Lily said as she hurried to the fireplace.

Lily bit her lip as she scanned the shelves at Slug & Jigger's Apothecary. She'd found the wormwood and castor beans, now she was just searching for things she didn't have.

"Ah! Miss Potter! How wonderful to see you here."

Lily turned around to see Professor Slughorn standing behind her, a bag in his hand. "Oh. Professor. What are you doing here?"

He held up his bag. "Oh, just buying a few items."

Lily grinned. "Same here. I thought I'd practice my potion work since I have nothing to do this summer."

Slughorn grinned. "Really? I'm glad to hear that. How is that going?"

Lily giggled. "Just started."

"What are you going to work on first?" he asked.

"Elixir to Induce Euphoria," Lily replied.

"Hmm. That's considered a bit advanced. Are you sure you can do it?" Slughorn questioned.

Lily smirked now. "Yeah. If not the first time, the second. I'll keep going until I get it right."

Slughorn laughed. "That sounds quite exciting. I wish I could see it." Slughorn paused in thought, and then snapped his fingers. "Ah! I've got it." He looked at Lily with shining eyes. "Miss Potter, how about you come to my home. You can practice and use my own ingredients, and I can examine and help if needed."

Lily looked at him in surprise. "Really? You would do that?"

He chuckled again. "Miss Potter, you are my favorite student. Of course I would. How about it?"

Lily smiled. "Yeah! Sure."

Slughorn smiled too. "Great! Well, let's get your things, and then we'll go."

Lily shrugged. "Perfect."

After buying her things, Slughorn and Lily left the apothecary, and Slughorn held out his arm. Just as Lily placed her hand on his forearm, they were being sucked through what felt like a tube, before dropping into a clean and posh sitting room.

"Here we are," Slughorn sighed. "Come along. We'll go to my own personal potion workstation." He led her out of the room, and down a hall. He pulled open the door at the very end, which contained stairs going down. "Ladies first," he insisted.

Lily moved past him and made her way down the stairs. It was dark, but once she'd reached the bottom, lights clicked on. Lily was amazed at the room she was in. It was like the potions classroom at Hogwarts, but much bigger. There were millions of ingredients upon millions of shelves, and bottles and bottles of different liquids of all shades.

"Amazing," she murmured.

"I'm glad you think so. Now, let's go to this table over here, and we can start," Slughorn suggested.

Lily followed his lead, but she couldn't stop looking at everything. "I love this room, Professor."

Slughorn laughed. "Well, if you would like, we could have sessions like this during the summer."

Lily whirled around to look at him in excitement. "Really? You mean that? I could come over, and we could practice potion making?"

He grinned. "I would love to have a summer pupil."

Lily was so giddy that she could barely stand it. "Thank you, professor!"

Slughorn smiled now. "It's no trouble at all. Now, let's get started!"

Later on, Lily couldn't help but smile. Sitting in the cauldron in front of her was a sunshine-colored potion. She was euphoric just looking at it. And she was right. It had only taken one try for her to get it right. The book and Severus Snape's written instructions were a big help.

"Perfect, Lily!" Slughorn complimented. Lily had gotten tired of him calling her 'Miss Potter'. "Right color, right odor. Complete perfection."

"Thank you, Professor," Lily said a little smugly.

"So, about these sessions. How about every other afternoon? You can Floo over at noon?" Slughorn suggested.

Lily nodded. "That sounds perfect, sir!"

"Excellent! Now, what should we start with next?"

Lily bit her lip. "Um, you pick something."

"Well, let's try something that's not normally attempted by just a third year. Let's try preparing antidotes," Slughorn replied.

Lily smiled brighter. "Sounds perfect."

"Yes, but first, you need to learn to prepare something in need of an antidote," Slughorn instructed. "Then, you can learn yourself how to make its antidote."

"Well, what would you suggest I learn how to make then?" Lily inquired.

"Let's try something easy first. Then we'll go on to something harder. So, let's try a simple and small love potion," Slughorn told her. He grabbed a book from his shelf, and flipped it open to the needed page. "Here are the instructions. Now, let's start."

Lily took a look at the instructions, and began to gather the needed ingredients. "Professor, I've got to ask, why are you doing this for me?" she asked.

She heard him sigh behind her. "Well, Lily, in all my years as a teacher, I've seen a lot of good potion students. Your grandmother and your father included. But I've never had a student as talented as you are. You're very advanced for your age," he explained.

Lily grinned. "Sir, I've only done second year level potions. I'm just now doing bigger things."

"I know, but you've always shown perfect potions. Never anything but great. And you've always done it with ease. You always seem so bored," Slughorn laughed.

Lily laughed too. "Yeah. You got me. I usually am bored during class, no offense."

"Well, Lily, if you would like, we could always continue these lessons during the school year," he suggested.

Lily looked back at him with excitement. "Really? That would be fantastic, Professor!"

"It would be my pleasure," he said with an amused chuckle.

Lily didn't get home until late that night. She was still giddy about the day she'd had. She'd made a perfect love potion, and followed with

a wonderful antidote. Professor Slughorn had been so proud. And then he gave her three bottles, one for each of her potions, and let her take them home. As happy as was, Lily was a bit afraid of how her parents would react to her being home so late, but her mother had told her that Slughorn had sent a note telling where she was.

"So, princess," Harry addressed at dinner, "what were you doing at Professor Slughorn's all day?"

"He was teaching me more about potion making. He had so much to teach. It was a lot better than class. He even taught me how to make antidotes," Lily listed.

Her mother and father looked at her with surprise. "Really?" Harry said. "That's usually sixth year stuff." James looked at Lily with narrowed eyes.

"How did you do?" Ginny asked

Lily looked at James with a bit of a smug look. After all, he would be a sixth year this September. "He said he'd never seen one done with perfection."

Harry looked over at James as well. "Will you be taking Potions again this year, James?"

James looked a bit grim. "I don't think so. I don't really like it. Plus I won't need to if I'm going to play Quidditch professionally," he muttered.

"How did you do on the O.W.L.?" Ginny asked.

James ran a hand through his hair. "I don't know. I didn't really like it, so probably not very good." He let out a sigh. "Like I said, I don't like the subject."

Harry now looked to his other son. "How about you, Albus? Are you ready for your O.W.L. year?"

Albus gave a cocky grin that made Lily roll her eyes. "You bet. I've been ready all summer. I plan on passing all of my subjects."

Ginny smiled. "I'm sure you'll do great, son."

"Thanks, Mum," Albus said around a mouthful of food.

"So, Lily," Harry spoke up, "I'm surprised that you haven't gone to visit a friend, or haven't had someone over."

Lily smiled and shrugged. "I've been lazy I guess. Why? Wanting to meet someone?"

Harry chuckled. "I was just curious. Have I met all your friends then?"

Lily shook her head. "Nah. You've yet to meet Jace. He's an awesome guy though."

"Your age?" Ginny asked.

Lily nodded. "Yeah, he's my age. Although he acts like he's six at times."

Ginny and Harry laughed a little. "Well, you should have him over sometime," Ginny told her. "I would love to meet him. He sounds like a joy to have around."

Lily tried to not roll her eyes at the thought. "Yeah, a real joy. But sure, I'll owl him a letter. I'm sure he'd love it. He says he's usually bored all summer."

"Really?" Harry asked.

"He says it's the one downfall of being an only child," Lily replied.

"Well, why don't you invite him over the day after tomorrow?" Ginny suggested.

Lily bit her lip. "Well, how about that day after that? Professor Slughorn offered to have me come over the day after tomorrow for another lesson."

Harry shrugged. "Sounds fine to me."

But Ginny was curious about the lessons. "You're going over there again?"

Lily nodded. "Yeah. He offered to give me lessons every other day."

Ginny smiled. "Well he must expect you to do great if he's offering to teach you during the summer."

"And during school. He said we could continue during term," Lily added.

"You must be his favorite student," Harry said with a smile.

Lily nodded with a smug smile of her own. "Yep. His best and favorite." James and Albus sneered at her and her words. But Lily knew, and so did they, that she was right.

Three days later, Lily was reading a potion book that Slughorn had given her to study as she waited for Jace to Floo in. She had set herself in the living room to wait. Luckily, her brothers were both gone. James had to work, and Albus had run off to Diagon Alley again. Apparently their uncle George hadn't been able to give Albus a job, but offered to be a reference. Lily hadn't laughed that hard in a while when she'd heard. Honestly, she was surprised Albus was getting a job. He'd always expected things to be handed to him. She just couldn't see him willing to work for anyone but himself.

Green flames roared in the fireplace, and Jace stumbled out of the fire. His cheeks were a little smudged with soot, but besides that, he hadn't changed at all. He grinned when he saw Lily. "Hey, Lili! What's up?"

Lily set down her book and smiled back at him. "Nothing much. How you been?"

Jace plopped down on the cushion next to her. "Bored out of my mind. Your letter was like a lifesaver!"

Lily giggled. "Well, my parents thought that it would be nice to meet you, and I figured that we could both enjoy not being bored."

Jace grinned. "Totally. So tell me, what have you been up to since the wedding?"

"Well, Slughorn's been giving me potion lessons," Lily replied.

Jace raised a surprised brow. "Really? You're taking potion lessons over the summer?"

Lily laughed at his face. "Yeah. And since I like Potions, it's fun. I'll be going over to his house every other day. And then we'll continue our lessons during school."

He shuddered. "Ugh! I couldn't do it!"

Lily rolled her eyes. "I'm not surprised. But, what about you? What have you been doing?"

Jace let out a sigh. "Nothing really. Christian came over last week, along with Hunter. That was the shining moment of my week. Besides that, I've been sitting around and doing basically nothing," he replied. He looked at Lily. "So, have you been hanging out with any of the others?"

Lily tried not to blush. "Last person I hung out with was Lysander."

Jace looked at her with interest. "Really? How did that go?"

Lily couldn't help but smile. "It was a lot of fun, actually."

"Miss Lily?" Lily and Jace looked toward the hall entrance to see Kreacher standing there. "Would you and your friend like something to eat?"

Lily looked at Jace. "Are you hungry?"

Jace gave her a sheepish grin. "Kinda, yeah."

Lily laughed. "Yes, Kreacher, thank you." She stood up, and Jace followed suit.

"Hey, Lil, after we eat, you wanna go out for a fly?" Jace asked.

Lily looked back at him and nodded. "Sounds like an awesome plan."

So when they finished up their lunch, Lily told Kreacher to tell her mother that her and Jace were going to go the Burrow. The field

outside the house was perfect for flying. Her grandmother seemed to be gone when they Flooed in, so they went out the backyard. Lily opened up the broom shed, and handed Jace one of the brooms that used to be one of her uncles'. Then they both mounted their brooms, and shot up into the air, and off and away from any sign of Muggles. Lily had to slow herself down a little, seeing how the broom Jace was using was no where near as good as hers. Soon the two were lazily floating through the sky.

"So, Lil, who do you think will be the Quidditch Captain this year?" Jace asked.

Lily let out a sigh. "I don't know. Adrian will be the oldest player, but he hasn't been on the team as long as some of the others. Will and Dante are only a year younger, and Dante's been on the team since like his third year or something," she replied.

"So, you think Dante will get it then?" Jace questioned.

Lily shrugged. "I don't know. Maybe. What I'm wondering is who we're going to get to replace Raven. He was a fantastic Beater, and a great captain." Now Lily looked at him. "Do ya think you'll try out for the team this year?"

Jace shook his head. "Nah, probably not. I like watching it more than playing it. Besides, I'm not built big enough to be a Beater, and I'm not good enough to do better than the others at tryouts," he explained.

"What position do you prefer?" Lily asked.

She noticed a faint blush on Jace's cheeks. "Well, I'm not very good at it, but I like Seekers."

Lily didn't understand his embarrassment. She loved being a Seeker. Maybe it was because he thought he wasn't good at it. Lily let it go, not wanting to possibly embarrass him even more.

Days slowly passed by, but Lily was thankful for it. It gave her more time to practice potions with Slughorn. But soon August came, and it too began to pass. The day finally came for the Potter kids to receive letters from Hogwarts.

Harry picked up a pile of letters, finding that there was more than usual. "Well, the Hogwarts letters are here," he commented at breakfast. He flipped through them. "Oh! James, your O.W.L. results are here as well."

"Oh, open them, James!" Ginny squealed in excitement.

Harry handed James the envelope. James tore it open, and scanned it. He grinned some, and then gave a few sighs. But he finally put their parents out of suspense. "Well, I got three O's."

"That's great, hun!" Ginny said with a smile.

"What classes, bro?" Albus asked.

"Defense Against the Dark Arts, Transfiguration, and Care of Magical Creatures," James replied.

"What else did you get?" Harry asked.

Lily couldn't help but almost smiled at James's discomfort. "Well, I got an E in Charms. An A in Herbology and Astronomy," he said with a slight smile.

Harry raised a brow. "And?"

James gave a sound that was a mix between a sign and a groan. "I got a D in Potions and Divination, and a T in History of Magic. But in my defense, those classes suck!"

Lily rolled her eyes. Typical. If James wasn't good at something, it was because it sucked, not because he sucked.

"Don't worry, James. Your grandmother will be proud just hearing that you got more than one O. That's all it takes for her," Ginny told him.

"What classes are you going to take?" Albus asked.

James looked over his grades again. "Defense Against the Dark Arts, definitely. And Transfiguration. Charms, I guess. And Care of Magical Creatures."

Lily looked at her father. "Dad, can I have my letter?"

Harry looked surprised, as if he'd forgotten about the others. "Oh, yeah. Here you go, princess." He handed all the kids their letters.

Lily looked at her book and supply list. She'd expected what she saw. The only new thing was that the classes Divination and Care of Magical Creatures had been added to her book list.

"Yes!" James cheered. "I got Quidditch Captain!"

Albus grinned at his brother. "No surprise. You're our best player. There's no way we can lose now."

Lily bit back her sigh. Saying something now would not end well.

"Good job, sweetheart," Ginny told her son.

"Dude, I got Prefect!" Albus exclaimed in excitement.

Lily tried not to drop her head on the table in front of her. Hadn't it been bad enough when James was made Prefect?

"Way to go, son!" Harry said proudly.

"Gryffindor is going to rock this year!" James cheered. Lily noticed the smug look he threw her way. Lily ignored him.

There was a distant roar, and it made them all look at the door. Ginny looked at her husband. "Are you expecting someone, Harry?"

Harry shook his head. "Kids?" None of them answered.

"Hello? I'm not interrupting anything am I?" Lily smiled at the voice.

"Scorpius?" she asked, practically jumping off of her chair. "What are you doing here?"

Before she could leave the room, Scorpius stepped in the doorway. He was grinning like mad, his hair ruffled so bad it looked like he'd been running through wind. "Hey," he greeted. Then he looked at her parents. "Hello, Mr. and Mrs. Potter. I'm not interrupting anything am I?" he asked again.

Harry gave a small grin and shook his head. But Ginny gave him a full smile. "Of course not. We were just having breakfast and reading over Hogwarts letters," she replied. "Would you like to join us?"

Scorpius chuckled. "Thank you for the invitation, but I really just came to tell Lily here something."

Lily raised a brow. "What's so important?"

Scorpius's grin got even bigger. "Well, first of all, I made Prefect."

"That's great, Scorpius," Ginny told him.

Scorpius smiled at her. "Thank you, Mrs. Potter."

"But what's the big news?" Lily asked. She knew that Prefect was not on his mind. He was just trying to be exciting.

Scorpius began to look smug. "Well, I thought I'd let you know, that you are looking at the new Slytherin Quidditch Captain!"

Lily's eyes grew wide and a smile almost tore apart her lips. She squealed happily, and hugged him tightly. Scorpius picked her up off the floor. "Really? That's great, Scor!" Scorpius put her down, and Lily pulled back. "We can't lose now! The cup's in the bag now!"

Scorpius grinned even wider. "I know! I've already got a plan, and I promise that it won't fail."

"How much do you think we'll win by?" Lily asked curiously.

Now Lily noticed Scorpius's eyes travel to her brothers. Then he was looking back at her. "No one will stand a chance against us."

Hours later, Lily found herself at Malfoy Manor, with only Scorpius as company. But not for long apparently.

"So, what's the plan here?" Lily asked again.

"I want to perfect our team, and my plan. To do this, we've got to have practice. So why not get ahead, and practice during the summer?" Scorpius explained. "The others are on their way."

"One problem there, Captain," Lily said with a sigh. "We're missing a Beater."

But Scorpius didn't look bothered. "No problem at all. Tanner wants to try out this year, and I'm confident that he'll make the team. So, I'm having him come over."

"So, you're only having Beater tryouts?" Lily questioned.

"That's right. What we need is teamwork. Mixing up the team and getting new players will not help out our teamwork," he explained.

"So, you'll be looking for a Beater with good teamwork skills?" Lily inquired.

"That's right."

"So, won't that make it hard for others to try out? Since Tanner will have already learned our plans, and will have had time to become part of the team, and get the feel for teamwork?" Lily mapped out.

Scorpius's brow scrunched in thought. "Hmm. Perhaps. But if he ends up being an amazing player, then why worry? It just means that we won't have to take the time for some other kid to get used to the feel of the team."

Lily thought about it, then nodded. "Yeah, I guess that makes sense." She sighed. "So, what's your plan for me?"

"Well, I was wondering if you'd be able to get a new broom? Your's is great, but there are some better models. And with you, I want to see if we can work on your speed. I mean, you've got aim, you can take a hit, and you are fast. But I want to see if we can get you even faster," he told her.

Lily looked at her broom. It was beautiful, and fast, but she had to agree that there was better out there. Perhaps it was time for a new one. But she knew that if she asked her parents for one, then her brothers would demand new ones as well. That would not help.

"Problem," Lily told him. "If I ask for one, then so will my brothers. My win will be their win."

Scorpius scowled. "Yeah, you're right. They would take the chance to capitalize. Hmm . . ." Suddenly his eyes lit up, and he clapped his hands. "I've got it! I'll buy you one."

Lily looked at him in surprise. "What? No. No, I couldn't ask you for that."

"You're not asking. And I'd be delighted. A gift for a friend and a teammate," he said with a smile.

Lily felt herself blush a little. "Thank you, then," she mumbled quietly. She glanced at her friend from the corner of her eye. She just couldn't stop thinking of how hot her friend and teammate was. Lily felt embarrassed at the thought alone. Scorpius was one of her best friends, not to mention two years older than her. Nothing would ever happen between them. And Lily could live with that. Very easily . . . hopefully.

Chapter Twenty: People Changing With Time

Lily couldn't hold back her smile as she closed her trunk, having finally packed her bags for school, the morning before they would be leaving. After Scorpius gave the news that he would be the new Quidditch Captain, time had passed even quicker. It was almost like being at Hogwarts all over again, which didn't really bother her. Every other day she had lessons with Slughorn, which were going great, and the other days the whole team had agreed to meet up and practice. Scorpius had been right, Tanner was a great addition to the team, and they were all sure that he would beat all of the other kids that tried out for the Beater position.

But now it was time for Lily to start her third year, and she was so excited for it! Hogsmeade trips, Quidditch, classes, and her extra lessons with Slughorn. But best of all, she'd be back with her friends, and away from her annoying siblings and cousins. It was perfect!

There was a knock at Lily's door. "Lily?" Lily turned her head to see her mum pop her head into the room. "Are you ready?"

Lily looked at her things. She had her trunk, and she'd already let Regal out so that he could fly to Hogwarts himself. And next to her trunk laid her brand-new broom. It was a Wood 100 Model, made by famous Quidditch player, Oliver Wood. After retiring a few years ago, there had been rumors everywhere that he was planning on starting up his own line of brooms. That had become true when he'd made his first broom two years ago, named the Wood Model. Now, thanks to Scorpius, Lily owned his brand-new model. It was sleek, and Lily knew for a fact it was fast, and had perfect turning. She fell in love as soon as she'd held it in her hand.

"Yeah, I'm ready," Lily told her mum with another smile.

Ginny closed the door. "Well, it seems that your brothers are going to be a bit longer. Albus isn't done packing, and James just started. I'm glad I woke you all up early."

Lily tried not to roll her eyes. Since they had all received their letters, James and Albus had been strutting around the house even more arrogantly. Albus never shut up about how he was going to be the best Prefect ever, and James never shut up about how Gryffindor

could never lose a game with him as captain. Lily was itching to prove him wrong this November.

"Surprise, surprise," was all Lily muttered.

Ginny chuckled and sat down on the bed, next to Lily's trunk. "Have you already sent Regal out?"

"Bout an hour ago," Lily assured.

"You have everything you need?" Ginny asked.

"Yes, Mum."

"Your uniforms, other clothes, your books, supplies . . ."

"Yes, Mum," Lily laughed. "No worries. I'm not the boys. I won't forget anything."

Ginny smiled fondly at her daughter. "I know. I just can't believe how big you're getting. I didn't know how small your robes from last year were until we got you refitted."

Lily sat down next to her. It was true. Their mum had made all of the Potter children try on their robes to see if they needed to get bigger ones. Only Lily and James had needed new ones this year. Lily remembered laughing at Albus's pouting face. Once they were away from their parents, Lily couldn't help but poke fun at how Albus wasn't growing at all, and would always be a little boy.

"Also, I wanted to ask you something, sweetheart," Ginny told her. She began playing with her daughter's hair absentmindedly.

Lily wasn't at all bothered by her mother's touch. "What is it?"

"Well, I noticed that when we got book shopping, you had a list of books that were separate from your school list. Your father bought them for you, but I was curious as to what they are, and what they are for?" Ginny asked.

Lily turned a little so that her mother could play with her hair more easily. "Oh, Professor Slughorn gave me the list, and asked if I could pick them up. They're for our lessons."

"Oh. And how are those lessons going, hun?"

Lily gave a contented sigh. "They're going really great. I love potion making. It's so interesting and fun."

"Well I'm glad you like it, honey. Really, I think you're the first one in the family to really enjoy it. Although Horace has constantly told your father and me about how much your father's mother was an expert at the subject," Ginny replied. She was no longer just playing with Lily's hair, but styling it. Mostly for fun.

"It's fascinating. You can do so many things with a simple liquid. From love to hate, from life to death, and from calmness to complete hysterics. It's an amazing concept," Lily told her.

Ginny giggled at her daughter's enthusiasm. "I also noticed that you and Lysander have been writing to each other a lot this summer."

Lily blushed. Of course her mother would notice. Lily rarely got to the mail before someone else did. But the thought of Lysander made her smile. "Yeah, we've been talking more. It's a bit of a shame to think that we barely talked at all once I started school. I think it's the age and House differences."

"I'm glad you're getting along with him so well, Lily," Ginny told her with a secret smile. Using the small bit of wandless magic she had, she summoned a brush and a hair-tie, and began to finish up her work on Lily's hair. "So, have you and Lorcan been writing as well?"

Lily let out a silent breath. "Um . . . no, I haven't. But Lysander mentions that he's doing good in all his letters, so I tell him to say hi for me," she explained.

Ginny put down the brush, now finished with her daughter's hair. "Sounds like things are going well for you."

Lily turned to smile at her mother fully. "Yeah, it feels that way. I'm just hoping that it lasts."

"Are you excited for Hogsmeade?" Ginny questioned.

Lily really smiled now. "Yeah. It should be fun."

"Ginny! Lily! The boys are ready now! Can we shove off now?" Harry yelled from downstairs.

Ginny rolled her eyes. "Just a minute, Harry!" She smiled at Lily. "Shall we join the boys?"

Lily gave a sigh and a forced smile. "Yep. Let's go." Lily shoved her wand into her pocket, and then grabbed her broom. She was eager for the boys to see it. She'd been hiding it from her brothers, and she couldn't wait to see their reactions. Her mother pulled out her own wand, and with a simple flick, her trunk was floating out the door. Lily followed her mum down the stairs. Ginny dropped the trunk in front of the door, where Harry stood.

"Are you girls ready?" he asked.

"I know I am," Lily told him with a smile.

Harry smiled at her as well. "Glad to hear it." He picked up her trunk. "The boys insisted on taking their own to the car, so let me take yours, princess."

The girls followed Harry out of the house, Ginny locking up as they left. James and Albus were standing by the open trunk.

"I told you we could get it ourselves," James told their father.

Harry just grinned at his sons as he threw in Lily's trunk. He looked back at Lily. "Any thing else, princess?"

Lily grinned, and held out her broom. "Just be careful with it. It's my baby." Harry chuckled, and took it with care.

James and Albus looked at the broom in shock. "What!" they both exclaimed indignantly.

"She's got a Wood 100! I asked you to buy me a new Firebolt and you said no!" James cried.

"Why does she get the brand-new model? You said it was too expensive!" Albus argued.

Harry raised a brow at his two sons. "Your mother and I didn't buy this broom. And since you both insisted on being adults and grown men all summer, I thought that you'd be saving up to buy your own things. Especially you, James, since you do have a job."

Both boys flushed, and glared at the ground. It took all of Lily's restraint to keep from laughing at them. To keep the peace, Lily hurried and got into the car. It was a silent ride to King's Cross. Lily could tell that both boys were still fuming over the fact that she had a new broom, and that they were curious as to how she got it. When they arrived at the station, Lily went first through the passageway. What she hated now was that her parents dragged her along with them and her brothers to find their cousins. Sadly, it was never hard to miss the tall form of Ron Weasley. Not to mention his flaming red hair.

"Lily Lu!"

"Lil!"

"Lily!"

All of their heads turned at the call of Lily's name. Lily turned to see Scorpius, Lars, and Mitch running toward her. She could help but smile. Mitch had changed the most. He was much taller, towering over his friends now. His hair was still the same electric blue that they'd all grown used to, only he now had a beanie over it. Along with his ear and his lip, his eyebrow was now pierced as well. And Lily could see more tattoos than she had before.

Mitch reached her first, and pulled her into a tight hug, lifting her off her feet. "So, where's your hot cousin?" he whispered into her ear.

Lily bit her lip to keep from laughing. "No clue. She might be on the train already." Mitch put her down, smiling even more. The other two boys finally caught up, both grinning.

"Ready for a new year, Lily Lu?" Lars asked.

She grinned back at him. "You bet."

Scorpius grabbed her trunk. "Come on. We already got a compartment picked out."

Lily smiled, happy to finally be away from her brothers and cousins. Lily turned to her parents, and hugged her mother. "Bye, Mum."

Ginny kissed her cheek. "Bye, sweetheart. Be good, and be sure to write often."

"Will do, Mum," Lily assured. Then she hugged her father. "Bye, Daddy."

Harry hugged his daughter tightly. "Bye, princess. Have fun at school this year," he told her.

Lily nodded, and gave him a smile when she pulled back from the hug. She looked at her aunt and uncle. "Bye, Aunt Hermione, Uncle Ron."

Hermione smiled at her. "Bye, sweetie."

"Later, Lily," Ron said with a smile.

Lily turned back to the boys, and the four began walking toward the train. Lars looked at Lily. "Just so you know, Scorpius and Lana are ditching us for a while."

Lily looked at Scorpius in confusion. "What does that mean?"

Scorpius just waved it off. "Prefect meeting. Lana got the Prefect position for the girls in our year," he explained.

Lily gave a nod in understanding. They boarded the train, and the boys led her to a compartment. Scorpius and Lars lifted her trunk in the storage compartment, then the four of them plopped into their seats.

Lily looked at Mitch. "So, how was your summer, Mitchie?"

Mitch shrugged. "It wasn't bad. I rocked out with Will, Rex, and Justin. Sat around, messed with my siblings, just the usual. How come you weren't at the Slytherin dinner?" he demanded.

Lily rolled her eyes. "I was busy, so I sadly could not make it." Honestly, Lily had scheduled a lesson with Slughorn before learning what day it was. And she hadn't wanted to break off the plans with Slughorn. So she'd sent a letter back to Scorpius telling him her situation, and that she wouldn't be going this year. He'd just told her that she was lucky, and he wished that he didn't have to go as well.

"Well, we missed you," Mitch replied, swinging his arm to rest over Lily's shoulders.

"I missed her more. Hanging around you boys is not the greatest time." Lily smiled as she watched Lana entered the compartment. She was looking a little taller as well, but her usually long hair was shorter, only reaching the tops of her shoulders.

"Wow, Lana, nice hair," Lily told her.

Lana brushed a hand through her locks as she sat down. "Yeah, my mum attacked me. She said my hair was getting ridiculously long. I felt like crying afterwards."

"I've honestly been thinking about doing something with my hair. Like maybe dyeing it pitch black," Scorpius joked.

Mitch laughed. "Dude, that would be awesome!"

"You should do it, man!" Lars agreed.

Lana rolled her eyes, as did Lily. Lana sighed. "Oh great, they've reached the rebel stage of boyhood."

"And we have to put up with it," Lily sighed.

"What do you have to put up with?"

Lily squealed, and got up and hugged Lola, who hugged her back just as tightly. "Merlin, it feels like forever since I've seen you," Lily told her.

Lola smiled. "I know. Not since the wedding. My parents took us on that dumb family trip I told you about in my letter, and then they extended it. It was so boring!" Both of the girls sat back down, only now they sat next to Lana. "So, what were you guys talking about."

Lana grinned at the boys. "About how we're going to have to deal with these idiots another year, basically."

Lola giggled. "But, we're missing the biggest idiot of them all. I don't see big ears."

"I'm right here, dirty." They all looked to see Jace standing in the opening of the compartment with a smile. "Miss me?"

Lola rolled her eyes. "Hardly."

The boys loaded everything up, and then they all took a seat. Jace offered to sit on the floor since there were too many of them in the compartment. He laid out along the floor, and the others all tried to not kick or step on him. Mitch nudged and kicked him every so often just to be annoying.

"So, are you three going to join us on the first Hogsmeade trip this year? It's usually a riot," Lars asked.

Lola looked at him with interest. "Really? How so?"

"Just a minute," Lana told him. She stood up, and pulled Scorpius up as well. "We've got to head to the Prefect compartment. We've got a meeting, remember?"

Scorpius just rolled his eyes. "That's not until we leave the station."

Lana cocked an eyebrow at him, and pointed at the window. Outside, not a single kid stood, but just parents and younger siblings. "That's usually the sign that we're about to leave. Come on."

Scorpius groaned. But he relented. "Alright, we'll be back in a little while. Later."

"I hope you make it back," Mitch joked.

Once Lana and Scorpius had left, Jace hopped up to take Scorpius's spot, and Lars leaned forward a little. "Ok," Lars said with a grin, "our Hogsmeade trip is awesome. First of all, we cause major trouble."

"I'm in," Jace assured with a grin.

Mitch laughed, but Lars went on. "And we usually have a way to get a few drinks."

"Which is always fun!" Mitch contributed.

Jace was grinning even more now. "Oh, I'm totally in."

Lola bit her lip. "Are you sure that's smart?"

Lars and Mitch shrugged. "We've been doing it the last two years," Mitch told her.

"And we've never been caught," Lars assured.

Mitch looked at Lily. "Are you in, Lily Lu?"

Lily shrugged. "Sure. Why not."

Mitch grinned. "Bitchin'."

Lars looked at Lola with a raised brow. "So, Lola, are you in?"

Lola sighed. "Alright, I'm in."

Lars grinned victoriously. "Perfect!" Then he paused and looked at Mitch. "Hey, not counting Lana, are the other girls in our year coming? I know the guys are."

Mitch was obviously biting back a grin. "Well, I know Miley isn't. But I know that Tamara agreed to go, and last I knew was that Layla was still unsure."

Lily looked at Mitch in amusement. "I can't imagine why Miley doesn't want to go."

Mitch laughed. "Well, she found out that I had sex with Trixie, so she refuses to talk to me. I guess that she'd expected me to chase her and try to get her back."

"What a bitch," Lars muttered.

"Sounds like it," Lola agreed.

Mitch raised a brow at Lola. "Really? You agree with that? I thought you liked Miley."

Lola shrugged. "I know when someone's being a bitch."

Mitch and Lars looked at Lola with astonishment. "Wow," Lars mumbled.

"I know!" Mitch agreed. "Little Lola's cursing! She's all grown up!"

Lily and Jace began to laugh, but Lola just sent the two fifth years a small glare, and kicked at Mitch's shin.

It was a while before Lana and Scorpius finally came back in. Scorpius let out a big yawn, and plopped down on Lana's previous seat, resting his arm on Lily shoulder, and dropping his head on his arm.

Lily patted his hair. "That meeting tire you out?"

"No, it was just really boring. I think I almost died," Scorpius muttered.

Lana shook her head. "It wasn't bad."

Scorpius brought his head back up. "All we did was learn a bunch of crap we all knew by common sense. The only important thing we learned was our patrol schedules for the train and for when we get to school."

"When do you guys patrol on the train?" Lola asked.

Lana kicked Lars off of his seat, moving him to the floor. "We're supposed to go in an hour."

Scorpius groaned. "I'm not going. I never asked to be a Prefect. I just wanted to be Quidditch Captain."

"So, you're just going to leave the train in ruins?" Jace asked.

Scorpius shrugged. "Why not. I'm in here, not out there."

"Sounds good to me," Jace told him.

"Oh, Scorpius, Lars," Lily addressed, remembering something.

Both boys looked at her with interest. "What?" Scorpius asked.

Lily grinned. "Well, I thought I'd let you two know that James and Albus finally saw my broom."

The boys were both grinning widely now. "Really?" Lars asked.

"What'd they say?" Scorpius asked eagerly.

Lily laughed a little. "They threw a big fit that I had a new one, and whined about how Dad didn't buy them one. And when Dad told them he hadn't bought it, he laid into them about how they'd both tried to be big boys all summer. They fumed and glared the whole way to the station!"

It wasn't just the boys that laughed, but the entire compartment. "I wish I could have seen that!" Scorpius got out between laughs.

"I can't wait to see the teams' expressions when they realize that our entire team has one of those models," Lars laughed. It was true. With a few dropped hints and nudging from Scorpius, Draco had let his son dip into his trust fund at Gringotts to buy the whole team a Wood 100 broom.

"Money says that Gryffindors throw fits, and Ravenclaws crap themselves," Mitch joked.

"What about Hufflepuff?" Lars asked.

"Who gives a crap about Hufflepuff?" Mitch laughed. They all began to laugh again.

"All I know is that Slytherin is going to dominate this year," Scorpius said cockily.

"Even more so since Adrian Flint made Head Boy," Lana told them.

"No way!" Lily said with a laugh.

"Seriously. Not that he led the meeting we had. He just let Meredith talk, and didn't even pay attention himself," Lana replied.

"That is awesome!" Jace exclaimed.

"Hopefully he'll strip James and Albus of their titles," Lily told them.

"I can't believe that Albus and Rose made it as Prefects," Lana groaned.

"The fact that Rose did doesn't surprise me, but I can't believe that Albus was selected," Lily groaned.

"This should be one hell of a year at least," Lars assured.

Lily yawned as she and the rest of the school waited for Professor Longbottom to bring in the new first years. Jace kept grumbling about being hungry, Lola was yawning as well, and Nikki Montana wouldn't shut up next to Scorpius, who she seemed to be talking to. But Scorpius was only staring at his empty plate, not really paying attention to her.

"Finally!" Jace grumbled as the doors opened, and Professor Longbottom led in a line of tiny and scared first years.

"I think I see my brother," Lola told them quietly.

"It's about time another Pritchard joined the ranks of Slytherin," Lana replied as she also scanned the crowd of kids.

The hat sang its song, and finally Professor Longbottom pulled out his list of names. "Adams, Camille," he called out. A tiny, and pale girl stumbled up to the stool. The hat fell past her chin.

"HUFFLEPUFF!"

Lily and the others lazily clapped as the girl made her way over to the Hufflepuff table. But they all began laughing when she tripped.

"Anderson, Violet."

"GRYFFINDOR!"

While everyone clapped, Mitch cupped his hands around his mouth. "Boo!" he called. The Slytherin table all began to laugh.

"Quiet! Everyone!" Professor Longbottom commanded. The Slytherins all bit their lips, but didn't hide their smiles. It wasn't long before they all became really excited.

"Avery, Alec."

Mitch's little brother looked a lot like him, at least before he'd dyed his hair. Alec's hair was sleek and black. His bangs were elegantly swept across his forehead. His eyes were dark, practically black. He didn't look at all nervous as he made his way up to the stool. That hat had barely touched his head.

"SLYTHERIN!"

Every Slytherin stood up, yelling, clapping, and cheering loudly. Alec was smirking broadly as he made his way over to the Slytherin table. Mitch yelled out again. "Alright, Alec!" he called. Alec looked toward his brother and smiled this time.

With every new addition Slytherin gained, they all got rowdy, and soon an unspoken contest started between Houses to see who could cheer the loudest. But when the name "Pritchard, Robert" was called, all the Slytherins waited in silent suspense.

"Come on, Bobby," Lola whispered.

Robert, or 'Bobby', looked a lot like Ginger did, with copper hair and green eyes. But he was pale, like Lola. He looked a little green in the face as he sat on the stool. But his nerves were unneeded.

"SLYTHERIN!"

The entire table jumped up again, and Mitch even jumped onto a chair. Not a single Slytherin was refraining from cheering their loudest. Bobby's face turned pink, but he still looked a little proud as he took his seat at his new table.

The sorting finished with "Urquhart, Eve" joining Slytherin, and the Slytherin House getting the last and loudest cheer of the night.

When the feast started, Jace instantly started stuffing his mouth full of food.

"I thought this moment would never come!" he groaned in appreciation.

"You are such a pig," Lola complained.

Jace ignored her, and took a bigger bite of his food, despite his mouth already being full.

"I feel so bad for poor Scorpius over there," Lana whispered to the others. They all looked to see that Nikki was once again talking, and didn't look as if she'd be stopping any time soon.

"Does she ever shut up?" Jace asked.

"Not around Scorpius," Mitch muttered.

"I've got a few Sickles that say he doesn't even know that she likes him," Lars joked.

"He is a bit dense on the subject," Lana agreed.

"With how many girls he has after him, you'd think he'd be a bit smoother with girls," Mitch remarked.

"You wouldn't expect someone like Scorpius to be romantically awkward," Jace joked.

Lily looked at Scorpius, feeling a bit bad for him. He looked as if he was getting ready to stab Nikki with his fork. So she cleared her throat. "Um, Scorpius, can I ask you an important question?"

Scorpius looked away from his food, his eyes giving a thousand 'thank you's. "Of course. What is it?"

"When do you think you'll be holding tryouts for a new Beater?" Lily asked.

Scorpius took the question seriously. "Hmm . . . I haven't really thought about it. I guess I'll hold them in a week or so. I'm really in no hurry. I mean, it's not like we can lose."

"You're very confident," Lana commented.

"We had summer practices," Scorpius told her. "I had Tanner fill in as Beater, and we're all a hundred percent sure that he'll beat all the competition at tryouts."

"I'm sure you'll win," Nikki cooed. "I don't see how anyone with your skill could lose, Scorpius."

Scorpius raised a brow at Nikki. "Um, thanks."

Lars snorted into his drink, and Mitch almost choked on his potatoes. The others all hid back their laughs at Scorpius's oblivion toward Nikki.

"So, um, Nikki," Lana addressed, "have you decided what you're going to do on the first Hogsmeade trip?"

Nikki glanced at Scorpius repeatedly. "Not yet, but I'm hoping that I'll find someone to go with."

Scorpius looked over at the three third years. "Oh, so I forgot to ask, are you three going with us this year?"

Lana shook her head in disbelief at how dense Scorpius seemed to be. Lily just smiled. "Yeah, we're going."

"Oh, what are you guys doing?" Nikki asked, sounding quite disappointed.

When no one else answered, Scorpius finally did. "Whatever we feel like, really"

Nikki giggled lightly. "That sounds like it might be fun."

Lars nodded. "It usually is."

"So, Lil," Jace said as he filled his plate again, this time with deserts, "did you hang out with Lysander again?"

Lily shook her head. "No, but we kept writing. Now that I think about it, perhaps I should have looked for him on the train." It would have

been nice to talk to him. But what if he had been sitting with one of her cousins? Or the Ravenclaw Quidditch team, who all practically hated her. Especially Mark Kimball.

"I didn't know you were talking to the Scamanders again," Scorpius commented.

"Yeah," Lana agreed.

Lily shrugged. "Well, mainly just Lysander. We started talking at the wedding, and then we hung out a few days later. But since that, it's just been letters."

Scorpius grinned. "Well I'm glad that they're not bitter 'bout us beating them, or about our House."

Lily grinned too. "Yeah, so was I."

"So, which one's Lysander?" Lana asked, glancing over at the Ravenclaw table. "Is he the burly one, or the one with the longer hair?"

Lily looked over at the table as well, and caught sight of the twins sitting together. She looked at Lorcan in surprise. Where had the small Lorcan gone? Sure, Lily could tell that he wasn't as tall as Lysander was, but he had really filled out! How had he gone from scrawny to built in such a short time?

"He's the taller one. The one with the longer hair," Lily told her.

"When did Lorcan get that big?" Nikki asked in surprise.

"Shit," Lars muttered. Lily understood his distress. After all, Lorcan was another Beater, and now he looked to be bigger than Lars. Lily hadn't thought that possible, with how big Lars looked.

"He's looking to be a bit of a stud," Lana said, agreeing with Nikki.

Lily tried not to laugh. "Well, if you're going to take a shot at dating him, don't be coy. Lorcan wouldn't know what flirting was unless you hit him with a brick. He's a bit dense about anything that isn't Quidditch," she told them.

"Count me out," Lana said with a laugh.

"The other one's pretty cute too," Nikki murmured.

Lily looked at the twins again, and this time her eyes locked onto Lysander. He was a head taller than Lorcan, his hair shaggy, his bangs wavy as they fell onto his forehead, not yet reaching his eyes. Said eyes were that dreamy blue color. His face was thin, and his smile was oddly cute. She had to agree with Nikki, which Lily was sure would never happen again. But to the others, Lily just shrugged and said, "I guess."

Chapter Twenty-One: Don't Mess With Slytherin's Girl

"So, what are we doing here again?" Lola asked as she looked out at the pitch. The entire Slytherin Quidditch team, plus quite a few other Slytherins, was sitting in the stands of the pitch as the Gryffindor tryouts got ready to start. They, along with a few other kids, were all waiting to watch.

"The team decided that we'd scope out the other teams' tryouts this year," Lily told her. "Scor's new and first decision as captain." Lily looked over at her. "And you just decided to tag along."

"There's Potter down there, looking like a jackass," Dante muttered as he sipped from a bottled water.

Lily looked down to see James standing on the grass in a practice uniform, with a clipboard in hand. His brow was furrowed as he looked at the paper. A whistle laid around his neck.

"This is going to be good," Lily muttered as the ones trying out came onto the field.

"Dude! Hugo Boy is trying out!" Jace said with a laugh.

Lily looked out again, and saw that it was true. Hugo was coming out onto the field. All of the Slytherin third years called him Hugo Boy, and treated him like a dog. It caught on after Lily had said in front of all of them that he was the Potter boys' puppy.

Christian and Jace both stood up on their seats. Jace cupped his mouth. "Sit, Hugo, sit!" he called out. Then the rest of the third year boys stood up and cupped their hands as well, and woofed and howled. The rest of the Slytherins began to laugh, while Hugo glared up at the stands, his face turning cherry red.

"And here's the rest of the Weasley lineup," Mitch said while he laughed. The rest of the family trying out had come out as well, and they all began to glare also. Except Lucy of course. Always the pacifist.

"Alright," Scorpius quieted down the Slytherins. "So, it looks like all Potter is going to do is add little Huey to the team. So it'll be the same thing with one new person."

"I thought Potter was having them all try out again?" Lana asked.

Scorpius rolled his eyes. "Like Potter's going to pick anyone over his family. In his fat head they're all better Quidditch players than anyone."

Lily snorted. "Yeah, that's why Molly fell off her broom that was a centimeter off the ground," she joked, much to the amusement of the others around her.

Keeper tryouts went first, and everything got a bit more interesting when they all learned that Hugo would be challenging Lucy for the Keeper position.

"Ooo! Tension in the family!" Lars laughed.

Scorpius almost fell off his seat. "Oh, man! How is Potter going to get out of this one?"

Lily watched as the tryout went on. Lucy did very good, worthy of the Keeper position on the Gryffindor team. But Hugo's tryout was worthy of something close to a reserve on a professional Quidditch team. That was no surprise though. It was all Hugo ever played as, and he practiced all the time as a kid.

"That Lucy kid is out," Mitch muttered.

"No chance is she coming back in as a Keeper," Dante laughed.

When Hugo's tryout was done, all of the third year Slytherins stood up. "Woof, woof!" they barked. James gave them a nasty look, and Lily gave him a small wave and a smile.

When the tryouts had ended, and the Gryffindors had all gone to shower before being told who made the team. Scorpius had the team huddle closer to listen to him.

"Ok, now, from the looks of it, everyone is the same, except that Potter will probably switch out Lucy for Hugo. And for their new Chaser, he'll probably pick that Tyler Creevey kid. So we have two new tactics to learn. And that Hugo kid is a much better Keeper, so we'll have to up our offense with Chasers," he told them.

When they finally came out from the locker room, James had them all line up so that he could call them out.

"Ok, Seeker, Albus Potter," James announced.

"Looks like we'll beat 'em again, huh, Lily?" Lars said loudly.

What was probably supposed to be Albus's proud stride was marred as the Slytherin's laughed, and he glared angrily at them as he looked back.

"Beaters, Fred Weasley and Marsha Finnigan."

Lily watched this carefully. Fred didn't look at James as he took his spot next to Albus. He didn't even look happy. It looked like he didn't even really care. James didn't look at him either. Marsha Finnigan looked happy though. She was very beautiful too. Tall, honey blonde hair, and pretty blue eyes. But she wasn't a stereotype. She wasn't a 'dumb blonde'. In fact, Lily remembered her as being quite smart.

"Our Keeper will be Hugo Weasley," James said with a smile.

As the Slytherin boys all woofed, Lily looked at Lucy. She looked accepting, but Lily could tell that she was disappointed. After all, Lucy loved flying, and loved Quidditch.

"And for our Chasers, we'll have me, Rose Weasley, and Lucy Weasley," James told them.

There was a great amount of surprise among everyone there, and there were quite a few angry looks from the kids that actually tried out for Chaser. But the Slytherins acted a bit differently. They laughed.

"Really, Potter? You saved your ass big time, huh?" Adrian said between laughs.

"Merlin, I'm tired of beating up girls on your team!" Lars joked.

"Looks like we'll have a few more broken nails on the field," Tamara Nott laughed.

Lily laughed too. It wasn't that she thought Lucy was too girly for the game. Actually, Lily knew that Lucy was a lot like her in the game of Quidditch. As long as she could fly and play, she didn't care how dirty she got. But what made her laugh was that James was still playing the elitist attitude. He never believed that anyone on his family that was in Gryffindor could be second in Quidditch to anyone else. He had often told her before she became a Slytherin that she would lead Gryffindor to victory in her second year.

"Way to piss off a chunk of your housemates, Potter!" Scorpius laughed.

James was obviously fuming, but he ignored the Slytherins as he kept talking to the team and the ones that had tried out. When he sent them off, Lily stretched.

"Well, shall we be on our way?" she asked. "I feel like I might throw up soon if I have to keep looking at Potter's face."

"Yeah, let's go," Scorpius told them. All the Slytherins stood up, and began to leave. But luck wasn't exactly with Lily once she'd stepped off the stands. She found Hugo waiting by the exit with a little group of other Gryffindor third years. And Hugo looked furious.

Lily grinned. "Hey, guys, look. It's the Gryffindor puppy! Woof!" she barked toward Hugo. The others all laughed.

Hugo gnashed his teeth. "Quit calling me that! I'm not a puppy!"

Lily scoffed and rolled her eyes. "Oh, please! I'm surprised you don't carry James's books to class for him." Hugo's face began to turn even redder. "Face it, Hugo Boy, that's all you are to them. Why don't you try manning up and taking a stand against them?"

Now Hugo scoffed. "Why? So I can be a total bitch, and everyone can hate me? So I can be like you?"

"Did you just call her a bitch?" Scorpius growled angrily.

"Because you might want to apologize if you did," Lars said with a glare. Both boys, plus the others of the Slytherin team came to stand around Lily. Hugo and the other Gryffindors now looked intimidated, although Hugo was hiding it a little.

Will Nott gave them a smirk through his glare. "Remember, kiddies, you're messing with the big boys here. If you can't back yourselves up and handle a fight, then you might not want to mess with Slytherin's favorite girl," he threatened.

Lily smirked at Hugo's now tinier form. "Wow, did you hear that? I heard the word 'favorite'. Now, how could I be people's favorite, yet be hated by everyone?" she mocked. "And, you say I'm a bitch? Well, I think you're a little mixed up. Because not only are you the Gryffindor puppy, but you're also James and Albus's bitch!" she spat.

Hugo glared at her, but he wasn't the one that fought back. It was a third year girl. Dark blonde hair, and snapping green eyes. If Lily remembered correctly, her name was Paige Wilde. "What a surprise. A Slytherin needing other and bigger people to fight her battles," she said snidely.

Lily glared at her now. "Oh, believe me, I don't need anyone fighting for me. I know for a fact that I can make sure you never talk again. And surprise, surprise, little Hugo needs a girl to stand up for him. No surprise that he isn't man enough to take care of himself. No, he needs Paige Wilde on his side. Tell me, does she hold your dick in her pocket too?" Lily sneered. The Slytherins all began to laugh and howl at the group of Gryffindors.

Hugo blushed furiously, but Paige just stepped closer. "Really? You think you can hurt me?"

Lily rolled her eyes. "I know I can hurt you. So why don't you go paint your nail and giggle somewhere else. I have better things to do than listen to you try and be witty."

Paige smirked at her. "Really? Because I think that you're just afraid."

Lily raised a brow at her. "Really? Afraid? Well, tell me, how afraid am I now?" Then without a thought, Lily swung, her fist connecting roughly with Paige Wilde's jaw. None of the Gryffindor's moved, too shocked at what they just saw. But the Slytherins all began to laugh and cheer again. Lily ignored them all, and jumped at Paige, knocking her onto the grass and dirt. She began to dig her nails into her cheek and dragging them down, and began yanking at her hair.

She dug her knee into what was probably her stomach. Lily turned Paige's head, and rubbed her face and mouth into the dirt. When she let go of her face, she punched her again, this time hitting her eye.

"What is going on here!" Following the voice, Lily was being dragged off of Paige. Lily kept reaching out for her, and kicking her feet. But she was pulled up, and Lily saw that it was Madam Hooch. She was let go, and Madam Hooch went over to Paige, who was coughing and hacking on the ground. Lily pulled a few deep breaths, and looked back at the large group of Slytherins.

Scorpius was looking at Lily in wonder and pride. "Lil, that was amazing!"

Lars laughed as he looked at her too. "You kicked her ass!"

"Way to go, Lily Lu!" Tanner cheered.

"I don't think I've ever been prouder," Dante told her.

Lola and Lana pushed past the team, and looked at Lily carefully. "Are you ok?" Lana asked. "Did she hit you at all?"

Lily shrugged, still panting a little. Adrenaline was still running through her. "If she did, I don't feel it."

Lola began to wipe the grass off of her shirt and pants. "Our first weekend, and you start a fight. You are unbelievable, Lily." But then Lola smiled as she looked at Lily. "But I'm proud of you." The three girls began to laugh.

"Miss Potter!" Madam Hooch screeched.

Lily's shoulders tensed, and she turned slowly to see Madam Hooch glaring angrily at her. She could see the Gryffindors helping Paige limp away, most likely to the Hospital Wing. "Yes, Madam Hooch?" Lily asked, trying to sound as innocent as she could. Not that it would help at all.

"You are in big trouble!" she yelled furiously as she marched over to the Slytherins.

Lily sighed. "Yeah, yeah. How many detentions?" she asked.

"Well why don't we let the headmaster decide that?" Madam Hooch suggested with a glare. She grabbed Lily's wrist. "Come along, Miss Potter." She then began to drag Lily off.

Lily looked back at her friends. "Avenge me!" she called out to them, causing them all to laugh again. But once she lost sight of her fellow Slytherins, it was silent. Madam Hooch didn't say a word, but Lily could feel the anger radiating off of her. Lily suddenly had thoughts of Madam Hooch dragging her off to kill her in a hidden corner. Then Lily had to keep from laughing at the thought. When the pair reached the gargoyle that guarded the headmaster's office, they stopped.

"Thestral," Madam Hooch said clearly. The Gargoyle jumped out of the way, and Madam Hooch pulled Lily onto the stairs, which began to take them up to the next floor. Lily was now honestly a little worried. What would Professor Brown say? Would he be angry with her? Madam Hooch gave her no time to think or beg, and knocked on his door.

"Come in!" Professor Brown called out to them. Madam Hooch opened the door, and pulled Lily in. Professor Brown looked away from some papers on his desk to see them coming in. He looked at them with a little amusement, but a lot of confusion. "Well, this is unusual. Is there a problem?"

Madam Hooch forced Lily to sit in the chair in front of his desk. "After the Gryffindor Quidditch tryouts, I found Miss Potter here physically and brutally attacking Miss Paige Wilde. Miss Wilde couldn't even defend herself. She needed six other students to get her to the Hospital Wing," Madam Hooch explained.

Professor Brown raised an eyebrow at Lily. "Is this true, Miss Potter?"

Lily sighed. "Sort of. There's more to it."

He nodded. "Alright. Madam Hooch, would you mind leaving me and Miss Potter alone. I need to speak to her privately."

Madam Hooch nodded. "Of course." She left without another word, shutting the door loudly behind her.

Lily watched her go. "I think old age has really done a number on her happy meter," she muttered.

Professor Brown gave a chuckle. "Well, Lily, this is a serious matter. Explain?"

Lily turned back to him and sighed. "Well, the Slytherin team decided to watch the Gryffindor tryouts this year, so a few others came with us. After the tryouts, we all left together, and Hugo and some other Gryffindor third years confronted us. Hugo was mad. So I kind of picked at him a little, and then he got even angrier."

"What did you pick at?" Professor Brown asked.

Lily rubbed at the back of her neck. "Well, I called him a puppy. And then I told him that he should man up and stand up against James and Albus. Then he retaliated and called me . . ." Lily trailed off, unsure if she should say it in front of the headmaster.

But Professor Brown just nodded. "Called you what?"

"He called me a bitch and said that everyone hated me. So the team all stepped up and got mad at him and in his face. Then Paige came forward and said that I couldn't fight my own battles. So I said that Hugo wasn't man enough and that he needed her to stand up for himself. So she started to get into my face, and doubted that I could hurt her. I said that I knew I could, but that I had better things to do then listen to her try to be witty. Then she said I was afraid. So I hit her," Lily explained. "But, in my defense, she asked for a fight. It's not my fault that she talked too much smack and couldn't hold her own."

Professor Brown closed his eyes and rubbed his temples. "Oh, Lily. She may have antagonized the fight, but you started it. And when you noticed that she couldn't even hurt you, you kept attacking. It's going to be hard to be lenient on you, and even lenient won't be nice," he told her.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Come on, Jacob. You know I'm not the only one in this school to get into a fight. And it was a fist fight. I didn't do

anything that can't be fixed by a few potions or simple spells," she argued.

"I'm going to have to write your parents," he told her as he looked at her.

"And that's punishment enough, believe me," Lily told him. She propped her feet up at the edge of his desk. "Besides, teen girls fight. It happens all the time. This one just went past words. And that's her fault."

Professor Brown leaned forward a little on his desk. "Look, Lily. I know that kids fight. But the kids that get hurt tell their parents. And then I'm expected to do something. I can't promote this kind of behavior. I can't not punish your actions."

Lily shrugged. "So what? Give me a couple of detentions. I'm cool with that."

Professor Brown sighed. "I'm afraid that it's going to have to be more than a couple, Lily. We're talking at least a couple of weeks."

"He gave you two and a half weeks?" Jace exclaimed. "Even after they started it, and she asked for it?"

Lily nodded. "Yeah, but I think I got off easy. I don't care. It was worth it."

"It's still a little unfair. She was let out of the Hospital Wing quickly. And she's still only got a few bruises and a split lip," Lola replied.

But Lily only shrugged. "It's fine."

"Hey, Lily, can you help me with this Divination homework?" Jace asked as he looked at the paper in front of him.

Lily pushed away her boring Transfiguration paper, and looked at his. "Sure."

"How is Divination for you two?" Lola asked. She had been true to her word, and had taken Arithmacy and Ancient Ruins.

"Stupid," they both muttered.

"All lies," Lily told her. "But an easy pass."

"I just don't get it, and can't lie very well," Jace told her.

"I'll try to contain my amazement," Lola muttered as she looked at her Ancient Ruins book.

"Hey, Lily Lu!" The three looked over to where a couple of sixth years had called her name. A taller boy had been the one to call to her, and they were all grinning. "Nice job beating that Gryffindor's ass earlier."

Lily grinned. "Thanks," she told him. Then she looked back at Jace's essay.

"Dude, you're like a celebrity now," Jace joked. "Then again, you were before. What with your winning streak in Quidditch."

"Like Will said, she's Slytherin's favorite girl," Lola reminded.

Over the next few days, the word of Lily beating up Paige Wilde had spread like a forest fire. People twisted the story. Some making Paige look like a victim, and some making her look like the villain. Lily paid no attention to the stories, just laughing about it with the others when it was brought up. Since she was stuck with a new detention every night since, she was always reminded of what she did. And when she's gotten a very angry, but not a Howler, letter from her parents, Lily was very much reminded of what she'd done. She was honestly a little afraid when her mother threatened to come to the school if anything like that happened again. Paige had been a sight to see in class after that. Her lip was a little swollen, and split in the middle. Her eye was a little bruised, the potion she took apparently hadn't worked enough. And she had faint scars from where Lily had clawed at her cheek. And apparently Lily had yanked quite a bit of her hair actually out, and so Paige had cut her hair shorter. It didn't even reach her shoulders now.

Classes turned out to be a bit boring still. Divination was easy. Lily was an excellent liar. But she always fell asleep in that class, angering Professor Trelawney to no end. And Care of Magical Creatures was always a bit of a pain. Not the class. She loved the

class work, and she found Hagrid to be a great teacher. But there were way too many Gryffindors in that class for Lily to handle.

But finally, the day came for the Slytherin team tryouts. Now, Gryffindor felt as if the tables had turned, for they had come to watch the Slytherin team. Scorpius had forbid the team from brining their new brooms, wanting to shock the entire school at the first game. He wanted to blow the Gryffindors away.

"Alright!" Scorpius told the ones trying out. "I posted in the common room that I was only going to fill in the Beater position. All the other players will be keeping their positions. After all, they've beaten all the other teams countless times, so I don't think I need to replace them. So, let's begin."

Lily watched with the rest of the team as numerous kids tried out for the position of Beater. But like the others, she wasn't surprised to see Tanner do the best out of all of them. And to make it fair, Scorpius held it to a vote of the team. They all voted for Tanner.

"Ok, you all did well, but Tanner is the winner here. But, the team and I will be posting a list of reserves later, so keep a look out," Scorpius assured them. "Otherwise, you can all go."

Lily stood up with the rest of the team, and stretched her legs. "So, Captain," Dante addressed, "when's our first practice."

"Tomorrow after dinner. Lily's worked it so that her detentions will be during breaks," Scorpius told them.

"Can we go then?" Adrian asked.

Scorpius nodded. "Yeah, let's go eat. I'm starved."

"We all are," Lars replied.

The team turned and began to walk. "Hey, Lily!"

They stopped, and Lily turned her head to see Lysander standing in the pitch, waving for her to come over. She smiled, and looked at the boys. "I'll meet you guys there," she told them. Then she was quickly making her way over to Lysander. She smiled even more when she was in front of him. "Hi there."

Lysander smiled. "Hey. I heard about the fight."

Lily's tried to keep her smile up, and did an ok job of it. "Really? Did I have horns in the story you heard?"

"Now, just wings," he joked. Lily laughed a little, but felt a little embarrassed. "I didn't really believe much of it, though. Just the part where you beat her up."

"Yeah, I believe that part too," Lily said with a forced laugh.

Lysander chuckled a little. "But, anyways, how have you been. I was a bit disappointed that we never had time to see each other again over the summer."

Lily blushed a little, her heart fluttering. "Oh, I've been good. I had a lot going on. If I wasn't practicing with the team, then I was working with Slughorn."

Lysander nodded, probably remembering her letters describing her practices and lessons. "Yeah, so are you still having those lessons?"

Lily nodded. "Yeah. We've gone way past third year stuff. I go from working on stuff from fourth year, to fifth year, to sixth year. It's been a lot of hard work, but it's been really fun," she told him.

"Yeah, it is a cool class," he agreed. Without really thinking about it, the two began walking toward the castle. "All I did over the summer was help my mum and dad with different work things, which was fun. I love magical beasts. It's why I take the class."

Lily smiled. "It is a fun class. The only bad part is that I have too many enemies in that class."

Lysander laughed. "I don't understand how you could have enemies at all, Lily. You're so nice, and funny."

Lily blushed again, only now her heart was hammering. She gave a weak laugh. "Yeah, but I'm usually only funny when I'm hurting someone's feelings."

But Lysander shook his head. "I think you've always been funny. And you've always been nice. I think people just get so touchy when you defend yourself."

"That's because I usually go over the top," Lily replied. "And I do sometimes start it."

"So? It's part of growing up. I've started fights before."

"Never a fist fight though." Lily didn't know why she was practically bashing herself in front of him. Maybe because Lysander seemed to be thinking that she was something that she wasn't. Like a saint.

"A fight's a fight. Someone always gets hurt," he told her.

Lily stopped walking, so he did the same. She looked up at him, and locked eyes with him. "Why are you defending me?" she demanded. She didn't mean to snap, but she didn't get it. Why was Lysander, such a sweet and nice guy, sticking up for her? She knew she was mean, that she made fun of people, and hurt them. She knew that she wasn't always nice. So why did he act like she was?

Lysander shoved his hands into his pockets, and his cheeks turned a little pink. "Because I like you. I think that's reason enough."

Lily felt like her face had burst into flames, and she was sure that her heart had already beaten a hole through her chest. She brought in a shaky breath, hating how she felt so . . . girly. "You . . . like me?"

Lysander scratched at his chin, his face a bit sheepish. "Yeah. I know it might seem weird, what with the two year difference, but . . . you're just so funny, and nice, and smart, and not to mention very pretty. And yeah, I've always thought that about you, but . . . this feeling is different."

Lily felt her whole body begin to feel weightless, as if she was floating. She felt like the smile on her lips would tear her face in half. "Well, what if I told you that I think that you're really sweet, and funny, and smart, and very talented, not to mention cute? What would you think then?" She didn't want to get ahead of herself. She didn't want to seem like some giggling idiot. So she was going to let him say if he wanted to be friends or . . . more than that.

Lysander's cheeks seemed permanently pink. "Well, then I would think that I should do this." And before Lily could ask what he meant, Lysander leaned down, and kissed her.

It was an innocent kiss, but Lily felt her heart soar. This kiss was so soft, so sweet . . . so perfect! Lily kissed him back just as softly and innocently, marveling in how soft his lips felt. But a little too soon, Lysander pulled away. His face was even more flushed, just like Lily was sure hers was.

Lysander cleared his throat. "Um, should I have done that?"

Lily smiled happily. "Yeah, you did the right thing."

"Well, then what do you think about me asking you to go with me on the first Hogsmeade trip?" he asked.

Lily's face almost fell. "I'd think that you're really sweet for asking, but I already made plans with the others."

Lysander's face did fall, and he bit the inside of his cheek. "Oh."

"But," Lily said quickly, "just know that if I hadn't already made plans, I would have totally said yes. I might have even squealed if didn't have plans already."

Lysander gave her a half smile. "It's ok. I understand. That's another thing I admire about you. You don't ditch people if you've already made plans with them." But what would he think of her plans if he knew? What would he think if he knew that she was going out to start trouble and probably drink a little? Would he still admire her? Would he kiss or ask her out again? But then again, why would he ever know?

Lily took his hand in hers. "How about you ask me that, but switch the part about the first trip to the second?"

Lysander smiled fully now. "Ok. Will you go with me to Hogsmeade on our second trip?"

Lily smiled back at him. "I'd love to."

"He asked you out?" Lola squealed. She and Lily were sitting alone in their dorm room, the other girls all enjoying their day outside.

Lily hadn't stopped smiling since she'd parted from Lysander. Lola had finally found the chance to drag her upstairs, and then drag the truth out of her. "Yes!" she squealed back. "I've never been so excited! I just wish that it was for the first trip to Hogsmeade instead of the second trip. I almost hate that I made plans with you guys."

"Just go with us next time!" Lola told her. "I think you should go on the date instead. The others would understand."

"Understand what?"

Both girls turned their heads to see Shannon Flint coming into the room. Shannon had changed a bit over the years as well. She was taller, the tallest girl in their year. Her once short and straight black hair was now long and quite curly. Lily never really talked to her much, at least not about personal things, but Lily found her to be very nice.

"Lily got asked out on a date by Lysander Scamander," Lola told her. Lily rolled her eyes at her best friend.

Shannon looked at Lily with happiness and surprise. "The fifth year? That cute Ravenclaw Prefect?" she squealed as she sat on Lola's bed. "What did you say?"

"Well I obviously said yes," Lily said with a laugh. "We're going on the second Hogsmeade trip."

"Why not the first? It's so much closer, and we'd get to hear the details sooner," Shannon asked with a grin.

Lily sighed. "I already promised the others that I'd go with them on the first trip."

Shannon sighed as well. "Well, you should probably go with them then, since you did say you'd go."

But Lola rolled her eyes. "But it's your first date, Lil! You know the others would understand if you didn't go."

"But even if they did understand, you did promise," Shannon reminded.

"What are you girls arguing about?" Megan Montague asked as her and Izzy Bones walked in. Megan was a nice girl . . . at times, but Lily was always able to get along with her. She was a little taller than Lily, with black hair that was always put up, and sharp green eyes.

Izzy Bones was the sweetest girl in their year, and the shortest. Lily got along with her easily, as did all the girls. In fact, they sometimes teased her that she should have been a Hufflepuff, good-heartedly that is. She had shortish light brown hair, and chocolate brown eyes.

Lola turned on her bed to face the girls, as did Shannon. Lily just rolled her eyes again. "Ok," Lola told them, "Lily has a date for the second Hogsmeade trip with Lysander Scamander. She wishes it could be the first trip, but she already promised to go with the others. I know the others wouldn't mind if she missed out on it for a date."

"But since she promised, I think she should stick with it," Shannon supplied.

Megan bit the inside of her cheek as she thought. "Lysander Scamander?"

"The Ravenclaw Prefect that's a fifth year," Shannon told her.

"He's one of their Beaters. The one with the longer hair," Lola added.

Megan looked understanding now. "Oh! Ok." She looked at Lily. "I think that if the others understand, you should go on the date. The guy's a total babe

"But, if she promised," Izzy said disagreeing.

Lily fell back onto her bed, laughing to herself as the other girls all debated about her date.

Slytherin's Princess

Chapter Twenty-Two: When September Ends

Lily yawned as she trudged her way down the corridors of the dungeons. She was exhausted. She was thankful that tomorrow was the day of their first Hogsmeade trip. The weeks had been so long. Classes took too much time out of her day, and there was too much homework. Even if it was easy, it was tiring to do. And then she had a detention every day, and all the manual labor was making her sore. And Quidditch practices were turning out to be a brutal addition to her day. She never complained, because she thought Scorpius was turning out to be a great captain, but she was always so tired after practices. Normally, she would go to bed straight afterwards, but she then had to go to Professor Slughorn's classroom for her lessons. But, she thought, at least she was losing sleep over potions, and that she couldn't hate.

Lily knocked on the door to the classroom before walking in. Slughorn was setting up a table for their lessons. "Good evening, Miss Potter. How was your day?"

Lily sighed as she came over and dropped her bag and broomstick. "Exhausting. I hope I'm not late. I had to shower after practice."

"Nope, you're right on time," he complimented.

Lily grinned as she sat on a stool next to the table. "So, what are we working on today, sir?"

Slughorn grinned mischievously. "Well, I actually have two assignments for you today."

Lily looked at him in surprise. "Two?" He never gave her more than one subject at a time.

"Yes," he said with a nod. "I have a project that you will continue outside of our lessons. I want to see how well you do without my help and direction."

Now Lily was even more intrigued. "What is it?"

Slughorn grabbed an open book from his desk, and placed it in front of her. The title said something that excited Lily. *Felix Felicis*.

Lily looked up at Slughorn with an eager smile. "Liquid Luck? You're letting me make that?"

Slughorn chuckled. "Yes. You will be making this by yourself, and after the six months are up, you'll bring it to me, and we'll see how you did. These instructions are also one of the books I gave you, so you'll have your own list of instructions."

Lily was wide awake now. "Thank you, sir!" she said, practically squealing.

Slughorn laughed fully now. "It's no problem, Miss Potter. But, moving on. In here, we will be working Everlasting Elixirs. This is something that my sixth years will be learning a little later this year. These potions all have effects that are forever. Some are good. Some are bad. We will do at least one of each."

Lily gave a shrug and a smile. "Let's get started then."

Slughorn started her on making a potion which would keep the drinker calm until the antidote was drunk. Then she made a potion that was supposed make the drinker repeatedly vomit. Luckily, she didn't have to test either one herself. Slughorn showed her other methods to test them.

Slughorn took a thick vial of each potion. "I'll save these with the other potions you've made. And I think I'll keep the cauldrons of these potions for when my sixth years begin practicing this," he told her.

Lily looked at the calming potion. Would she really always be calm? When Slughorn turned his back, Lily dug a vial out of her bag, and quickly took a small sample. She shoved it into her bag again, looking innocent when Slughorn turned back to her.

"Well, Miss Potter, you are looking very tired. So why don't you go back to the common room and sleep. You can start our little project tomorrow," Slughorn told her.

Lily smiled at him thankfully. "Thank you, sir." She cleaned up the station, and then put her thing back into her bag. She was careful not to break the vial of the potion she took. When she was through, she pulled the strap of her bag over her shoulder. "Sir, can I ask you something?"

"Ask away, Miss Potter," Slughorn told her.

"How advanced is making the Felix Felicis?" she asked.

Slughorn smiled even more. "So advanced that it's difficult for me to make it."

When Lily was back into her dorm room, she didn't go straight to bed. Instead, she pulled out the book that held the instructions for making the liquid luck, and looked over the description. It was very difficult. You had to do everything just right, with no mistakes. It was easily explosive if you made a simple mistake. Lily cleared a space by her bedside table, and set up her cauldron and potion equipment. There was no better time to start than now.

Lily stretched her arms as she began to finally wake up. She looked over at Lola's bed, which was oddly empty. Lily fell back onto the pillow, staring at the canopy in surprise. Lola never left the dorm room without waking up Lily first. Wondering what was up, she got out of bed, and began to get ready for the day. They would all be going to Hogsmeade a little before lunch. Lily made sure that she had her permission slip in the pocket of the jeans she picked out. She pulled on a Holyhead Harpies shirt, and then pulled her hair up into a ponytail. Then after making sure she was ready for the day ahead, she left the room.

Upon descending the stairs to the common room, Lily saw Izzy sitting on the couch reading. She walked over to her. "Hey, Izzy, where's Lola?"

Izzy looked up from her book. "Oh, she went off to breakfast with the others. I'm just not that hungry," she told her.

Lily gave a small hum. "That's different. She usually wakes me up before she leaves," she murmured.

Izzy put in a bookmark, and closed the book. "Oh, she said that you've been really tired lately, so she thought that you'd need the sleep."

Lily smiled at the thought. "Oh. Well, do you want to go to breakfast with me?"

Izzy shrugged. "Sure, why not. See what the others are up to today."

The two girls left the common room, and made their way out of the dungeons. "So, what were you reading?"

"Studying Herbology," Izzy told her. "I hate that class. I'm so terrible at it. I don't see how you're good at everything."

Lily did her best not to scoff. "I'm not that smart."

"You've gotten perfect scores on everything! Every end of the year exam you've taken has been a perfect!" Izzy argued.

"They're easy," Lily retorted.

"Only to you. To the rest of us, they can be a challenge," Izzy told her.

Lily just shrugged. "Well, call me a freak then."

"I'll stick with smart," Izzy laughed. The two girls laughed together as they walked into the Great Hall. They made their way to the Slytherin table, ignoring the whispers and looks that Lily got. They found the other third years all sitting in a group together.

"Thanks for waking me up," Lily said teasingly to Lola.

Lola grinned at her. "You looked exhausted last night. You needed the little extra sleep."

"Here, Lil, sit," Jace told her, pulling out the chair next to him. "I saved ya a seat."

"Thank you," Lily told him. She sat between him and Shannon, and Izzy sat next to Christian.

"So, what are the plans for the morning?" Hunter questioned.

Lily shrugged as she began to pile food onto her plate. "No idea." Lily thought back to the potion brewing next to her bed. She'd have to check on it after breakfast.

"We should go outside," Monty suggested. "We can figure something out from there."

"It is a beautiful day," Megan agreed.

"Sounds good to me," Jace replied.

"I heard that Gryffindor was having their first practice this morning before they left for Hogsmeade," Christian told them. "We could always go and 'watch' them."

Shannon grinned toward Christian. "I think that's the best idea yet."

So after breakfast, and after Lily had checked and followed a couple more directions for her potion, the Slytherin third years were making their way to the Quidditch pitch.

"Think little Miss Wilde will be there?" Megan asked the others.

"I can only hope," Lily muttered.

"You gunna kick her ass if she is?" Xavier asked eagerly.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Yeah, because I love the detentions so much that I would love more."

"If she starts trouble, though?" Shannon asked.

"Then yes. I will definitely," Lily assured.

They made their way up into the stands, and sat down. A few other Gryffindors had apparently come to watch, and they each gave the Slytherins a glare.

"Look over there," Lola whispered to the others, pointing toward the top of the stands. Paige Wilde was sitting with a few other

Gryffindors. It seemed as if she had noticed the Slytherins, but was trying to ignore them.

"Look at that!" Jace said eagerly, pointing in the opposite direction. They all looked to see the teachers' box, which was obviously empty.

"What about it?" Izzy asked.

"You think they've got the megaphone over there still?" Jace asked excitedly.

"Maybe," Christian said, now catching on. Without any other words, the boys started to make their way over to the box. The girls followed, but it wasn't without words.

"What are you idiots going to do?" Megan demanded.

"Something stupid," Lola muttered. But they all sat down in the box, while the boys looked down at the pitch.

"Found the megaphone!" Hunter cheered. He looked down at the pitch as well, and placed the megaphone to his mouth. "And now, coming out of the locker room is the famous Gryffindor Quidditch team!" he announced. The others watched as the team trailed out of the locker room. The entire team was looking up at the teachers' box, trying to see who it was that was talking.

Christian took the megaphone. "Their captain, James Potter, is a boy notorious for being a whore and a bully toward young girls."

There was a break out of whispers and mutters among the crowd. From the box, they could see James fuming on the ground. He looked up at the box, but was too far away to see who it was.

Now Jace took the megaphone. "And their Seeker, Albus Potter, a boy who is known for losing and falling for simple and stupid tricks. And then there's their new Keeper, chosen purely for his skill, and his relation to egotistical James Potter, who has a terrible superiority complex."

Lily got up from her seat, but kept bent down so that the team couldn't see her. She looked around the box, and saw a door that led to the back.

"And then we have Rose Weasley," Shannon announced. "She's smart, she's classy, and glued at the knees. Boys just eat her up." All of the girls began to snicker now.

"Oh shit!" Monty cursed.

"Language, Monty," Megan mocked with a laugh.

"No, guys, Potter's coming up here!" he hissed.

"Shit!" Shannon repeated.

"This way!" Lily told them, waving them toward the door. She pulled it open, and they all followed after her. Lily ran around a few support beams, and ran down a few stairs. She soon realized that they were under the stands, and she could see the feet of those sitting there.

Jace stopped by her, panting from the running. "You think he knew it was us?"

"I'll bet they knew it was a group of Slytherins," Lola told him, holding the stitch in her side.

"But that could still be any Slytherins," Megan reasoned.

"I can barely breathe," Hunter wheezed.

"Let's head back to the castle," Christian reasoned. "The farther away from here we are, the less likely the chance of us getting the snot kicked out of us."

"I'm not scared of James," Lily muttered, but she followed the others out from behind the stands. They ran over to the lake, and stopped. They dropped down onto the grass, catching their breath and relaxing.

"They are probably pissed off!" Jace laughed. Soon they all began to laugh.

"Potter will probably be trying to find out who it was for months," Megan said between laughs.

"That was so much fun!" Lola said while laughing.

"We've got to do that more often. I love messing with Gryffindors," Hunter joked.

They laughed about it for the rest of the morning, and couldn't help but tell the other Slytherins. Word went around the other Houses about how a group of kids had been calling out things about the Gryffindor team. Apparently Rose had been in a foul mood ever since.

"You guys are unbelievable," Lana told them as they all waited in line for Professor Longbottom to take their permission slips for Hogsmeade.

"But we are so proud," Scorpius told Lily quietly.

"I'm glad, because I was thinking of an even better prank for tonight," Lily whispered to him.

Scorpius looked at her, his face showing his interest. "Really? What is it?"

Lily smirked. "I say we break into the Gryffindor common room."

Scorpius looked at her with pride and glee. "That is brilliant!"

"We just have to figure out the password," Lily told him.

"Shh!" Lana hissed. "Longbottom!"

They both looked forward. Longbottom was only two people ahead of Lana. When he finally came to Lily, he held out his hand. "Permission slip, Miss Potter."

Lily always had to hold back a laugh when he was formal with her. It was like her uncle Ron calling her 'miss'. But she didn't laugh. She took the permission slip out of her pocket and held it out to him. "Here you go, sir," she said, not holding back a grin at her use of formal words. He ignored her grin, and went past her to Lola, who was behind her.

Soon, they were all allowed to go, and the group of Slytherins began to make their way to Hogsmeade.

"So, guys," Scorpius announced, "Lily Lu has an awesome idea for later tonight, that involves torturing a few Gryffindors."

"We're listening," Mitch said eagerly.

"I was thinking that we try and find out the Gryffindor password, and then sneak into their common room," Lily told them.

"But we'd have to find the common room first," Lana told her.

"I know where it is," Lily replied.

"Then let's do it!" Lars cheered.

"But how about we get a drink and some lunch first?" Tamara suggested.

Lily finally paid attention to their surroundings, and noticed that they had arrived at Hogsmeade. It was fabulous! People were everywhere, talking, going in and out of shops. Other kids were laughing as they entered Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes.

"Well, the best place for that is The Three Broomsticks," Scorpius said. He went over and held the door open. "Ladies first," he told them, letting the girls go in first. Lily blushed a little when he smiled at her.

"Pick a table girls," Lars told them. "Anywhere you want."

"Let's take that one," Lana said, pointing to an empty table toward the back. The group of Slytherins made their way toward the table.

"So, what do we want?" Scorpius asked as they sat down. "My treat."

"Just get the usual, dude," Mitch told him.

"What's the usual?" Lola asked.

"A burger, with fries, and a butterbeer," Lars answered.

"Sounds fulfilling," Jace said with a grin.

"Then I'll get . . . ten orders of that sent over to us," Scorpius told them. Then he left to the bar.

"Oh, Lily, look who's here," Lola said with a smile.

Lily looked at her, confused, and then looked to where she was pointing. Across the room was Lysander . . . with his brother and her family. Lily blushed a little again.

"Oh great! A bunch of pains in the ass," Will Nott muttered.

"That's not who I mean," Lola told him. "Lysander's with them."

Lily bit her lip in silence as she looked at the group. Did they know about Lysander asking her out? Had they said anything to him? Lily hadn't been able to talk to him since he'd asked her out, only giving each other looks in the hall and at dinner. Would they try to stop him?

"What's the big deal about Lysander? You gotta crush on him?" Mitch teased.

Lola rolled her eyes. "Not me."

"So, Lana's got the crush?" Rex Derrick guessed.

"Try again," Lana told him.

"Surely Lily Lu's not the one with the crush?" Justin said in surprise.

"Lily Lu's got a crush?" Scorpius asked as he came back to the table. A look that seemed to be a mix of confusion and a scowl overcame his face.

Lily rolled her eyes this time, and she was hoping that her small blush didn't get any bigger. "It's not a crush. I just happen to have a date," she mumbled.

"What?" Lars exclaimed.

"Do we approve?" Mitch asked of the other boys.

"With who?" Scorpius demanded.

"Whoa!" Lily told them, holding out hands to stop them. "Ok, since when did I have six older brothers? I mean, I already have two that I hate. Do I need more?"

"Well us Slytherins have to protect our House's princess," Mitch told her.

"We can't let some creep snag a date with her," Lars confirmed.

"Who is it?" Scorpius demanded again.

Lily let out a groan, while the other girls rolled their eyes. "Ok, first of all," Lily told them, "it's with Lysander. And second, he's not a creep. He's actually a really sweet boy, and he's cute. And thirdly, I don't need a hoard of boys coming to my rescue. I can take care of myself."

"We're just protecting you," Will replied.

"We don't want you to get hurt," Rex told her.

"Because we care," Justin assured.

"Lysander Scamander?" Scorpius said in shock. "That twiggy little dork?"

Lily scowled at all of them. "He's not a twig! And what's wrong with Lysander? I mean, he's never hated anyone because of their House or their family. And he's not a jackass."

Mitch was still scowling a little. "Well, we still get to talk to him before this 'date'!" he told her.

Lily just rolled her eyes. "Whatever you say," she muttered.

Lana just patted her on the shoulder. "Consider yourself lucky. When Clete Parson asked me out last year, my dad followed him all around school, and Lars wouldn't leave him alone for a month," she told her.

Lily looked at her in confusion. "But, didn't you stop seeing him after one date?"

Lana nodded. "Yeah, I did. They apparently didn't get that memo." The girls all began to laugh when the food and drinks were brought to their table.

"So, who's coming to supply us this time?" Mitch asked, thankfully changing the subject.

"Aaron offered to come this time," Lars told him.

"What a great man," Mitch joked.

"So, where are we going after this?" Lola asked.

"Wherever we want," Will told her. He picked a fry off of his plate, and held it as if to throw it. "Ok, who thinks I can hit the back of Potter's head?" he asked.

"You better be able to if you want to stay as one of my Chasers," Scorpius joked.

"Ok, on the count of three," Will told them. "Someone count."

Rex leaned forward and started the count. "One . . . two . . . three!"

Will reared his hand back, and launched the fry across the room. It flew through the air, and hit the back of Rose's head, instead of James's. Rose's head whipped around, her hand going to her hair. The Slytherins had all quickly looked back at each other, and began to mutter random things, all while trying not to laugh. Lily was sure that she caught Rose glaring at them.

"She's not looking anymore," Justin told them. Then they all began to laugh.

"That was awesome!" Mitch cheered, high-fiving Will.

"Little bitch deserves to be hit with something harder than that," Tamara joked.

"I hear that," Rex agreed. "She bitched and whined at me yesterday because I told some Ravenclaw dick to suck one."

"Believe me, she never shuts up," Lily muttered. "I hear her every time she comes over to my house."

"How often does she come over?" Tamara asked.

"A lot. Our parents have dinner together a lot. At least during the summer," Lily replied.

The others all groaned. "Wow, you never escape them, huh?" Lana said sympathetically.

"No matter how hard I try, I never truly get away from them," Lily joked.

"Alas, a tragedy," Mitch murmured sadly. But then he broke his character and grinned.

"Remind me, where are we going?" Lola demanded as the group made their way through the crowded street of Hogsmeade.

"Somewhere. Quit asking," Rex told her. "Asking questions ruins surprises."

"This way," Scorpius told them. Lily looked at where they were turning. It was a narrow alley between two buildings. It was wide enough that they could all fit through it, but thin enough to make them walk in a line.

"Did I ever tell you guys that surprises make me paranoid?" Lola said dryly.

"Just chill, Lola," Justin told her.

"Hey, does Lola have a nickname?" Will asked.

"Dirty," Jace replied immediately.

Lily rolled her eyes, and Lola reached back and pinched Jace. Mitch laughed. "I think he meant a nickname that she won't kill us for saying."

"Not that I know of," Lily told him.

"Then she needs one," Scorpius muttered. "Guys! Brainstorm!"

"Well, the Muggles have this really popular character named Lola," Lily told them. "But, she's not human."

"What is she?" Lola asked curiously.

"A rabbit. She comes from a television show," Lily answered.

"What's a television?" Justin demanded.

"A Muggle contraption," Mitch told him. "Learned about it in Muggle Studies."

"A rabbit, huh?" Lars murmured.

"How about Bunny?" Will suggested.

"That's . . . not bad," Scorpius muttered.

"Kinda catchy," Mitch agreed.

"Hey!" Lana said, catching all of their attentions. "We're here!"

Lily looked forward to see that they were coming out of the alley. Once she'd stepped out from between the buildings, she looked around them. They were on a stretch of grass, and nothing else . . . except a small fence. Behind that fence was a large field of grass. And on that field was a tall and rickety house. Lily looked at it in confusion.

"Where are we?" Jace asked.

Rex rubbed his hands together in eagerness, and he gave an excited face. "This, kiddies, is the Shrieking Shack."

Jace and Lola gasped in surprise, but Lily looked at the house in excitement as well. She had heard stories about this place. Lily walked to the fence and leaned closer.

"Isn't that the most haunted house in all of Britain?" Lola asked shakily.

"Yeah," Justin told her.

"No one has ever gone inside it and come out," Mitch said mysteriously.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Are you scared?" she asked. She knew it wasn't haunted. Her dad had told her all about it.

Will scoffed. "Let's see you go in there!" he challenged.

Lily looked at him with a raised brow. "Fine. I will." Without hesitating, Lily climbed the fence.

Lola ran to the fenced panicked. "Lily, he was bluffing."

"Yeah, I wasn't serious," Will assured.

But Lily just shrugged, and kept walking toward the house, ignoring the others' warnings. She heard a muted thump behind her, and then running. She kept walking, and soon Scorpius was walking beside her.

Scorpius grinned down at her. "I couldn't let you go in there alone. Besides, I don't believe in that dumb legend anyway. I've never heard any ghostly sound coming from this place."

Lily rolled her eyes. "It's not haunted. My dad told me. It was a fake story, because there used to be a werewolf at Hogwarts. He came to his house on full moons. The story kept people away. It was Teddy's dad, actually," she told him quietly. The others had all climbed the fence as well, but Lily didn't want them to hear. It would ruin the fun.

Scorpius nod. "Ah. That does make sense. So, it's just an empty house?"

"Yep," Lily told him. She climbed the creaky steps, and moved to open the front door, but there was no knob. She pushed at it, but it did move. So Scorpius moved her aside, and kicked it. The door swung open, and creaked. Lily looked inside. It was dusty, and

pretty dirty, but stable. She stepped inside, and Scorpius followed her.

"Ok, we've stepped inside," Lola said, "now let's go!"

"I'm with Lola," Tamara told them.

Lily rolled her eyes, not able to take it anymore. "It's not haunted, guys. My dad told me all about it. A werewolf used to stay here on full moons. It was a long time ago."

"How do you know he doesn't come back?" Lana asked carefully.

Lily blew out a breath, thinking of Teddy. "Because he's dead. He was Teddy's dad."

"Oh," Lana murmured.

"I didn't know that Teddy's dad was a werewolf," Jace commented.

"Yep. His mom was the Metamorphmagus," Lily replied.

"So, this place could just be an awesome place to hangout?" Rex wondered aloud.

"Pretty much," Lily said with a grin.

"Ok, this place is filthy, and I'm not hanging out here," Tamara argued.

Justin rolled his eyes. "So picky," he muttered. He pulled out his wand.

"Wait!" Lana stopped him. "Are you crazy? You can't use magic here?"

"Why not?" Justin asked. "It's part of Hogsmeade, and we use magic on these trips all of time." He pointed his wand at the dusty floor. "Scourgify!" The dust cleared off the floor. Will pulled his wand as well, and began to follow Justin's lead.

"When is Aaron coming?" Lana asked.

"Four o'clock. Gives us two hours before we have to head back to school," Lars told her.

"What time is it?" Scorpius asked.

Rex looked at the watch on his wrist "Thee-fifty."

"I'll head back and get the stuff," Mitch told them. "Be back soon." He left the house, shutting the door behind him.

"See, Tamara," Justin said, "this place isn't so bad once you clean all the crap off it."

Lily looked around. The two boys had gotten quite a bit of dirt and dust out of the room. It didn't look too bad.

"So, what's the plan?" Rex asked. He plopped down onto the old couch. A bit of dust flew up, but he ignored it.

"Well, we save the firewhiskey for later tonight," Lars told him.

"After we mess with the Gryffindors," Scorpius said with a grin.

"Definitely," Lily agreed.

"That means we'll have to sneak it into the school though," Lana pointed out.

Scorpius scowled. "She's got a point."

Lily bit her lip. "Well, Teddy once told me that there's a secret passageway in the school that leads to Hogsmeade. If we use that, then we could just leave the stuff here and then come back later tonight."

Everyone perked up and looked at her. "Really? Where?" Justin asked eagerly.

Lily shrugged. "I'm not sure." But then an idea struck her. "But I know how to find out. But we will have to get into the Gryffindor common room."

"No problem," Will told her.

"This is going to rock!" Jace cheered.

"Guess who early!" Mitch exclaimed as he came back through the door. And following him was Aaron.

"Dude!" Justin said with a grin.

"Bro!" Lars cheered.

Aaron held up a bag. "I had a few extra minutes before practice."

"How is practice?" Lily asked. Aaron's work on the Appleby Arrows had become famous.

"Grueling," Aaron told her. "But worth it. I'm aiming for the World Cup this year."

"High standards," Lana scoffed. "That's why he doesn't have a girlfriend."

"Bite me," Aaron muttered.

Mitch took the bag from him, and set it down in the middle of the floor. He began to the bottles out. "You got some Muggle stuff?" he asked, holding a bottle. The liquid inside was a blue color.

Aaron shrugged. "I thought I'd make you all try something different. But the firewhiskey is still in there."

"Found it!" Mitch said with a grin. He pulled out two bottles of amber color.

"I threw in a few butterbeers as well. I wasn't sure what all to buy you guys," Aaron told them.

"No worries. Supplying minors is good enough for us," Lana teased.

Mitch pulled out a bottle with a clear liquid. "Alright, I say that our three newcomers go first."

Lola pulled in a deep breath and kept her distance. "I'm still not sure."

Mitch rolled his eyes, and looked at Lily. "How about you, Lily Lu? Will you go first?"

Lily shrugged and held out her hand. But as soon as she felt the neck of the bottle touch her palm, she felt butterflies. Was this really a smart thing to do? Should she even? Lily questioned the action in her mind, but she still took the bottle, and twisted off the lid. The smell of the liquid was almost foul. With her mind going a mile a minute, Lily wondered what her parents would say if they ever knew. Nothing, they'd probably kill her. Or just yell at her for hours on end. All the while, her brothers would probably try to act like fake little angels.

Lily pulled in a deep breath through her nose, and brought the bottle to her lips. She tilted the bottle, and the liquid poured into her mouth. Lily fought back a flinch at the taste. It was as bad as it smelled. But she kept her composure, and swallowed it. It was hot going down her throat, despite how cold the bottle was. Once it was all down, her chest began to burn. But Lily found that it wasn't unpleasant.

"So?" Mitch asked with a raised brow.

Lily licked her lips, tasting the remaining drops on her lips. "It's not bad actually."

"Hand it," Jace told her. Lily gave him the bottle, and laughed with the others when he did flinch. "Merlin, that's strong!" he choked out.

Now they all looked at Lola. "Well, Bunny? Are you going to try it?" Rex asked.

Lola stared at the bottle that Jace was holding out to her. Lily figured that she was probably deliberating like Lily had. But, like Lily, she seemed to have come to the same conclusion, as she grabbed the bottle, and took a drink. She spluttered a bit, but clamped a hand over her mouth. The others chuckled, and Rex quickly took the bottle out of her hand. Then he took his own drink.

"That was gross!" Lola complained.

"You get used to it," Lars assured her as he took the bottle from Rex.

But Aaron took it from him and took a quick drink before handing it back to his brother. "Well, kids, I've got to go. I'll talk to you later." Then he left the house, fixing the door on his way out.

"I feel really strange," Lola said with a giggle. They were all heading back to Hogwarts, and Lola was giggling and stumbling.

Mitch bit back a laugh, but not a smile. "Merlin, Bunny's a complete lightweight."

"We're going to have to get her to bed once we get there," Scorpius said with a laugh. "We can't let her go to dinner and have people see her acting like this."

"Yeah, us girls will take her to her dorm," Lana told them.

"Let's just hope that no teachers see us," Lars muttered.

"How do you other kids feel?" Justin asked with a laugh.

Lily looked over at Jace. He wasn't walking the straightest, but he was able to hold a decent conversation. Lily herself felt fine. A little lightheaded, and her chest was still burning a bit, but overall, she could still walk and talk with others.

"I'm fine," Jace said quietly. That was another odd thing Jace had started doing after three drinks. He was talking really quietly.

"I feel ok," Lily told him, her voice a normal level.

"That's good," Will told her. "Means you're not a lightweight. Not that being light is a bad thing." He glanced over at Lola.

"It's like I'm floating!" Lola said between giggles.

"Ok, we're getting close to the gate. Someone hold her straight and shut her up," Lars stated.

A thought struck Lily. "How about one of the guys gives her a piggyback ride? That would seem harmless enough to a teacher, right?"

"Great idea, Lily Lu!" Mitch complimented.

"I got her," Rex told them. He bent forward a bit. "Someone help her up." Lars grabbed Lola's waist, and hoisted her up onto Rex's back. Rex grabbed her legs, and Lars coaxed Lola into wrapping her arms around his neck gently.

"You got her?" Scorpius asked.

"Yeah, she's light and comfortable," Rex replied.

"How are you doing up there, Bunny?" Mitch asked.

There was no reply. They all looked over toward Rex, and looked at Lola. Her eyes were shut, and her face was peaceful.

"Is she sleeping?" Rex asked, trying to glance up at her.

"Yeah, she's out," Tamara said with a laugh.

"Poor girl," Lana murmured. "I just hope she doesn't end up throwing up tomorrow."

"So do I," Lily muttered.

They all changed the subject as they came near the gate into the school. Lana's dad was standing there, checking the list of all the kids coming back before the curfew. They did their best to seem casual, and Jace had done his best straighten his stance.

Mr. Goyle smiled at them as they came to the gate. "Hey, kids. How was your day?"

"Not to bad, Dad," Lars told him with a grin.

Mr. Goyle looked at Lola. "I see Lola passed out."

Mitch gave a small laugh. "Yeah. She was complaining all day about being tired, but we didn't believe her."

"When did she fall asleep?" Mr. Goyle asked as he chuckled.

"About ten minutes ago," Scorpius lied smoothly.

"We'd better get her to the dorms before Rex drops her," Lana joked.

Rex rolled his eyes. "Ha ha."

Mr. Goyle gave them a wave. "I'll see you kids around."

"Bye, Dad."

"Yeah, later, Mr. Goyle."

They all gave their quick goodbyes, and then upped their pace toward the castle.

"That's one obstacle out of the way," Scorpius said with a sigh.

"The easy one," Lana warned. "After all, our dad's not the brightest guy."

"Point taken," Mitch told her.

Once they were in the castle, they immediately made for the way to the dungeons, hoping to avoid any and all teachers. They took the stairs a little slow for Rex as he tried not to jostle, or worse, drop, Lola. When they got to the blank wall, they all gave a sigh of relief.

"Gaunt," Scorpius stated.

The wall slid to the side, allowing them all into the common room. Rex followed the girls to the stairs, but stopped just at the girls' stairs. He carefully lowered her down, but kept a hold of her.

Lana grabbed hold of her sides. Rex looked at Lana skeptically. "You think you can carry her up there, Lana?"

Lana shrugged. "We'll see. Just help me."

Rex nodded, and then leaned down, and knocked Lola off her knees, picking her up off the ground. He held her out to Lana, who held her arms out as well. Carefully, Rex placed her in Lana's arms. "You got her?"

Lana's arms dropped a little, but she stood up straighter, wobbling only a little. "Yeah, I can do this. She's light as hell."

"She ought to eat more," Rex muttered in agreement.

"Follow me," Lily told her. The girls all trailed up the stairs, Tamara keeping close to Lana incase Lola began to slip from her grip. Lily stopped at the door that read "Third Year Girls", and opened the door. She poked her head inside to see if any of the other girls were there. It was empty. "Bring her in," Lily told them.

The two fifth year girls stepped inside, and walked toward the middle of the room. "Isn't this cozy?" Tamara teased.

Lily looked around their room. There was an assortment of clothes laying around, mostly from the other girls trying to decide on what to wear. Books were piled by bedsides, small trinkets and objects littered bedside tables and the floor. Posters and pictures were taped to the walls. Lily shrugged. "We think so. Lola's bed is this one." She pointed to the one bed that had been made. She moved forward and pushed aside the blanket.

Lana moved forward and set her down, resting her head on the pillow. "Think we should change her into her bed clothes?"

"It'll probably be more comfortable. Besides, if she throws up, I don't think she'd want it to be on a pretty outfit like the one she's wearing," Tamara replied.

Lily moved to the dresser by Lola's bed, and pulled open the top drawer. Lily grabbed one of Lola's nightshirts and a pair of shorts. "Here we are," she told the other girls.

Lana carefully, with Tamara's help, began to pull Lola's shirt over her head. Lily handed her the nightshirt, and Lana pulled it over Lola's head. She straightened it over her upper body, and then slid her hand up Lola's back.

"What the hell are you doing?" Tamara asked in surprise.

"Unsnapping her bra. I know for a fact that it's bloody uncomfortable to wear one in your sleep," Lana replied. She slipped her hands out from her shirt, and carefully pulled the straps down Lola's arms. Then she slid her hands back up her back and slowly pulled the bra out from under her shirt.

"Here are her shorts," Lily said as she held them out.

Lana unsnapped Lola's jeans, and Tamara pulled them down as gently as she could. Lana took the shorts, and with Lily's help, pulled them over her legs. Then Tamara pulled the blanket over Lola's body.

"There," Tamara said in accomplishment. "That should do it."

"Let's go get the boys and go eat," Lana said.

"Great idea. I'm starved," Lily groaned.

The other girls laughed. "Is that a Weasley curse? I've never seen any of your family not hungry," Lana asked.

Lily laughed as well. "Perhaps some gypsy hated our family," she joked.

The girls left the room, closing the door behind them, and went down to collect the boys. At the sound of the girls approaching, the boys all stood from where they sat.

"Did you get her to bed?" Mitch asked.

"Completely. Now, let's go eat," Lily told them, ushering them toward the door.

Scorpius draped his arm around her shoulders. "Hungry, Lu?" he asked with a laugh.

"Extremely," Lily said with a smile. "I feel as if I haven't eaten anything all day."

"Same here actually," Scorpius said in agreement. The group entered the Great Hall, and automatically made their way to the Slytherin table. It was loud at dinner today. Most of the chatter was the left over excitement of the first Hogsmeade trip. Lily could hear people talking about Honeyduke's and her uncle George's shop. The group sat down together, and immediately began to fill their plates.

"So, what's the plan on getting into Gryffindor's common room?" Lars whispered.

Lily motioned for them all to lean in closer. "Ok, we'll have to sneak in there late at night, once everyone's asleep up there. But we'll have to watch out for prefects and teachers patrolling the halls."

"There are three groups patrolling tonight," Lana told her. "The Slytherin sixth years, Hufflepuff fifth years, and the Ravenclaw seventh years."

"So no worries about one of the groups, but we still have to avoid the other groups, and the teachers," Scorpius planned.

"Ok, one or two of us will have to hide near the entrance to the common room and wait to hear the password," Lily told them. "Then we'll go back later in the night."

"So what's the plan on how to get back to Hogsmeade?" Mitch asked.

Lily shifted a bit uncomfortable. "Just trust me on that part." She bit her lip. Her only wonder was how she would get the map back to James. She knew that James would suspect thievery, but then again, how would he be able to blame Slytherins?

"So, who's going to wait by the entrance to their common room?" Will asked.

"Well, obviously Lu has to be there," Justin told them.

"And not Jace," Tamara said, looking at the dazed looking boy.

"I'll go," Scorpius offered.

"Then we have our team. The rest of us will be waiting in the common room for your stunning return," Mitch said with a grin.

"Where are we off to now?" Scorpius asked Lily as the two began walking through the corridors. It wasn't far from the curfew for younger students, so there was no doubt that the two Slytherins would find a few first years coming back to their common room.

"The entrance to the Gryffindor common room," Lily teased.

"Which is where?" Scorpius asked. In order to be safe, he'd stuck his Prefect badge on his shirt.

Lily rolled her eyes with a sigh. His impatience never stopped surprising her. "Merlin's beard, it's on the seventh floor! Just be patient!"

Scorpius held his hands up in surrender. "I was just curious."

"You were just asking me a million times over," Lily retorted.

Scorpius laughed. "Well they say the millionth time's the charm."

Lily stopped them as they came to a hallway. At the very end there was a portrait that Lily remembered vaguely as the Fat Lady. She'd only been here once, and it ended in a screaming match between her and James.

"This is it," Lily whispered. "It's at the end of the hall."

Scorpius's brow furrowed as he looked down at the portrait. "You mean, it's behind that portrait?"

Lily nodded silently, looking for a place to hide. She moved to the left wall and placed her hand on it. Then she began walking, her hand sliding across the bricks as she did so.

"What are you doing?" Scorpius asked.

"I'm checking to see if there's a passageway around here. We need somewhere to hide," Lily told him.

"Nice thinking," she heard him say behind her. Lily placed her hand over a tapestry, pushing her hand on it. She didn't feel brick.

"I think I found a place," Lily called out. She pushed the tapestry aside to find an opening. Lily moved inside and looked down the long passageway. It was dark toward the end, which meant that it was either really long, there was something blocking the other exit, or a dead end.

"How quaint," Scorpius muttered as he stepped in beside Lily.

Lily dropped the tapestry, casting darkness around them. "It's perfect."

"But how are we going to hear people talk in here? That portrait is halfway down the hall," Scorpius pointed out.

"Light up your wand," Lily told him as she fumbled around in her pocket.

Scorpius pulled out his wand. "Lumos," he whispered. Light shone around them, helping Lily to see better.

Lily pulled out a long, thin, flesh colored string. She grinned up at Scorpius. "Despite being a Slytherin, what kind of Weasley would I be if I didn't have an Extendable Ear?"

Scorpius looked at the string, and then looked at Lily with a prideful grin. "You're so smart that you're almost scary."

Lily chuckled. "I'd like to say clever, but thanks for the compliment." Lily threw one end of the string out of the tapestry, and then handed Scorpius the other end. "Hold this." When he'd taken it from her hand, Lily pulled out her own wand. "Windgardium Leviosa," she murmured. The string rose in the air, and with her direction, the string continued to float down the hall. Lily dropped it just by the portrait. "Do you know a disillusionment charm?"

"One. But it's not very good," Scorpius replied.

"Whatever works. Just do it to the string once we're ready," Lily told him. She took the string end from him and placed it in her ear. Then she pulled another string out of her pocket and attached it to the main string. She handed it to him. "Put this in your ear, and then use the charm."

Scorpius did as she said, and placed the string in his ear. Then he pointed his wand toward the string on the floor and muttered a charm. Lily watched as the string disappeared from sight. But when she touched her ear, she could still feel the string.

"And now we wait?" Scorpius asked.

Lily sat down onto the floor. "And now we wait," she whispered. Scorpius gave a nod, and he sat down across from her. They waited in silence, making sure not to even breathe loudly. Scorpius stretched his legs out as well as he could, his feet pushing against the wall next to Lily. Lily's eyes traveled up his legs, noticing that his knees were bent. Lily looked at her own legs. They were straight, yet her feet didn't touch the wall next to Scorpius. He was getting taller, that was obvious. Lily wasn't very short, but yet not the tallest.

"So, how are you and Elisa doing?"

Both Lily and Scorpius sat up straight. They pressed onto the string into their ears, listening intently to the girl that was speaking.

"Same as always. Just fine."

Lily and Scorpius looked at each other in shock. That was James's voice!

"Must get boring after awhile, same old, same old?" the girl replied. Lily couldn't place who the voice was, and Scorpius looked just as curious. What Lily did notice was the flirtatious tone of voice the girl used.

"Eh, I guess. But I'm used to routine." James replied.

"Well, maybe sometime you and I could perhaps break that routine?" the girl suggested. Lily looked at the tapestry in surprise, as if she could see right through it. Surely, James wouldn't.

But she heard James chuckle. "I thought you liked Elisa? I thought that you two were friends?"

"We are, and I do like her. That's why I think that we shouldn't tell her. Spare her the heartache. Besides, I happen to like you a lot more than I do her." Lily grit her teeth. She was no fan of Elisa Ogbourne, but to do something like this behind her back? Behind anybody's back was terrible.

Now James was laughing. "You know, with your cunning, you could have been a Slytherin. But you're a bit more bolder than a slimy Slytherin."

"Is that a 'no' then?"

Lily waited in suspense for his answer, but there was no response. Scorpius's brow furrowed, and carefully, he pulled back a bit of the tapestry. Then he let it drop. "They're snogging," he whispered quietly.

Lily looked at the tapestry, almost wishing that she could see through it even more. How low would James go?

"It's known that James Potter has never said no to a pretty face. So how could he say no to such a gorgeous face as yours?" James finally said. Then they heard it. "Babbling Botany."

The two listened closely as they heard footsteps, and then a muted thud that Lily took for the portrait closing.

"Take off the charm," Lily whispered.

"Finite," he whispered. Lily watched as the string appeared in sight, and then she pulled it out of her ear. Scorpius followed suit, and began to pull the string into the tapestry. Lily pulled the strings apart, and stuck the smaller one into her pocket. Once Scorpius pulled the other string completely into the passageway, Lily took it and put it into her pocket as well.

"Let's get out of here," Lily told him.

Scorpius held up a hand, and pulled the tapestry to check to see if the hallway was empty. He looked back at her. "Hurry, come on."

The two hurried out from behind the tapestry, and then began to walk casually down the hall, and away from the Gryffindors' entrance. Scorpius killed the light coming from his wand, and the two turned the corner to the stairs.

"I can't believe James," Lily muttered. "I knew he was an ass, but that was . . ." she couldn't even describe.

"And with Lyla Stretton. The girl is a complete idiot. And Elisa was much better looking," Scorpius told her.

Lily didn't know who Lyla was, and had no idea what she looked like, but that wasn't what mattered. "He'll take any attention he can get."

"James Potter doesn't care who gets hurt as long as he gets his dick wet. And if more than one girl will do it, then that's just icing on the cake," Scorpius said with a shrug.

"That's disgusting," Lily mumbled.

"Some guys are like that," Scorpius told her. "And some guys wish that they were cool enough that it would happen to them."

"Not all guys are like that. You aren't," Lily pointed out.

Scorpius chuckled. "Yeah, but I find most girls annoying, and not worth the time to date."

"But you're still a guy with hormones. So there's hope for your gender," Lily teased.

Scorpius rolled his eyes. "Because I happen to find most girls my age to be annoying?" he shook his head and laughed. "Whatever you say."

Lily just laughed with him.

"So, why isn't Jace coming with us?" Lana asked as the group moved through the dark corridors.

"The guy can't walk straight without falling down," Rex muttered.

"Shh!" Lars hissed.

The group was making their way to the seventh floor. Scorpius had taken point, his wand lit as they moved. Will had taken the back, his wand lit as well.

"Where are we?" Mitch asked.

"Seventh floor. It's just around this hallway," Lily told him.

"Lily, you give the password. You'll look a little more familiar to the portrait with your hair, so you'll seem less suspicious," Scorpius told her.

Lily touched her hair, hating how he was right. But she moved to the head to the group, walking next to Scorpius. When they'd reached the portrait, Lily stood up straight.

The Fat Lady looked at her expectantly. "Password?"

"Babbling Botany," Lily stated firmly.

The Fat Lady gave a gesture that a mix between a bow and a nod, and then the portrait moved to show a round opening, and darkness from within.

"Looks like it's empty," Lily whispered. She stepped inside, looking around as she came to the middle of the room. It was a large circle, with comfy-looking chairs, some tables, and a large fireplace with only a few embers left.

"How expectant," Rex muttered as he looked around.

Lily couldn't say anything. This was where she would have been staying if she'd been a Gryffindor. And she didn't like it. It was too . . . well it was too cozy. It all seemed so weird.

Lars went to the stairs. "Which one leads to the girls?"

"The right," Lily said, mostly playing a hunch.

Lars took a step on the left staircase and waited. Nothing happened. "Lu's right. Ok, guys take the guys, and girls take the girls. Let's cause some damage," he said with a grin.

"Just remember the warnings," Scorpius reminded them.

"We know the code," Lana muttered. She, Lily, and Tamara moved up to the girls staircases.

"I've got the seventh year girls," Lily told them immediately. "I know how to cause major damage in there."

The other girls looked at each other, but shrugged. "Ok. Go ahead."

Lily pulled out her wand. "Lumos." She moved down the hall quietly, and finally found the door that marked the room she was looking for. Lily quietly pushed it open, and then looked inside. All the curtains to the bed were closed. Lily closed the door behind her. "Muffliato." Lily was loving Severus Snape's book more and more each day.

Now able to move a little more freely, Lily began to move toward one of the walls. "Flagrate," she whispered. Then she began to move her wand in simple motions, spelling out words that left spark-like letters on the wall.

"SP ALWAYS WINS"

Then Lily moved around to find a piece of paper. She found one, and a quill a one a bedside table. She began to write.

"Don't trust Lyla. She's no friend. And be careful of James. He's never really alone!" Lily hoped that Elisa would get the meaning of what she meant by 'alone'. Lily moved to each bed, and quietly checked behind each curtain until she found Elisa. When she did, she dropped the piece of paper onto her pillow, and then dropped the curtain. Then Lily began real havoc.

Eventually, Lana peaked her head in. "Hey, how's it going in here?" Then she got a real look at the room. "Wow. Way to go." Lana looked at Lily's message. "SP?"

"Slytherin Princess," Lily said with a laugh. "I got the idea from the boys."

"It's a perfect fit," Lana told her with pride. "Especially since there's a girl in Hufflepuff with those initials."

"Even better," Lily laughed quietly. "How did you girls do?"

"Great. We've hopefully scarred all of them," Lana told her.

"Good. Let's get out of here," Lily whispered. She cut off the Muffliato charm, and the two silently left the room.

Tamara was just waiting down the hall. "Now we've just got to wait for the boys."

"Actually, there's something I need to do in one of the boys' rooms," Lily told them. "I'll be back."

Ignoring the girls' looks of confusion, Lily walked to the boys' hallway, and stopped at the door that said "Sixth Year Boys". She pulled it open and instantly cast the Muffliato. Then she closed the door behind her. The boys' didn't have their curtains closed, but Lily was sure that they were all hard sleepers. Lily looked around the room. The Slytherin boys had torn the room apart. But Lily was on a mission. She moved over to James's bed, and began to rummage through his things. She couldn't find it!

Then Lily had a hunch. She looked up at James's sleeping form. She stood up and looked at her brother. Then she glanced at his pillow. Slowly, she slid her hand under his pillow, making sure not to nudge his head. Then she felt it! Lily grabbed the paper, and slowly but firmly, slid it out from underneath the pillow and James's head. Lily looked at the paper with a smile.

The Marauders' Map was hers . . . at least for the time being.

Lily turned to leave, but when she saw a blank wall by the door, she couldn't help herself. She pulled out her wand once more. "Flagrate," she whispered. Then she began to write again.

"CHEATERS SHOULDN'T TALK LOUDLY. THEY MIGHT GET CAUGHT! - SP" Lily couldn't help but to leave a mark that she'd been there, even if James didn't know who it was. Lily dropped the charm on the room and left it silently. Down the hall, she could see a light fading down the stairs. Lily followed it.

"Where's Lu?" she heard Mitch ask.

"She's not with you?" Lana asked. "She said she was going to one of the boys' rooms."

"I'm right here," Lily told them as she came down the stairs.

Scorpius looked at her in surprise. "What were you doing?"

Lily grinned and held up the map. "I was getting our way out of Hogwarts. Plus, I thought that I should leave James a little warning."

The others glanced at each other, but then began to grin. "Will it terrify him?" Justin asked.

Lily now looked smug. "He'll certainly watch himself. And if I did my job right, he'll soon be quite single."

Scorpius looked at her in understanding now. "You mean, you left a note for his little whore?"

Lily rolled her eyes. "That's a pretty general group," she muttered. The others laughed quietly, but Lily turned to the boys' staircase. "Glisseo," she muttered. Before their eyes, the boys' stairs turned into a steep slide.

"You are brilliant, Lily Lu," Mitch complimented as the group began to move toward the exit.

"I know," Lily sighed, but then she laughed with the others.

Once they were outside of the lions' den, they all let out a collective sigh of relief. Then they were moving down the hallway while Lily and Scorpius explained what they'd heard while getting the password.

"What a fucking dick!" Tamara said indignantly.

"Complete jackass," Mitch said in calm agreement.

"Surprise, surprise," Will muttered dully.

"Who's there?"

The Slytherins all tensed at the sound of the distant voice. It was no one that they recognized, so that excluded any Slytherin and teacher.

"Run!" Lars hissed. The group took off running down the halls, doing their best to make as little noise as they could. Which didn't really work.

As she ran, Lily pulled out her wand and tapped the map. "I solemnly swear that I am up to no good!" she whispered. She was instantly greeted by the showing of the map. Once they'd turned onto a hall, she stopped running.

The others all looked back at her. "What the hell are you doing? We've got to go!" Rex urged.

Lily unfolded the map. Greg Belby's dot was running toward the hallway next to them. Lily quickly scanned the hall they were one for a passageway. She found one not far from them, and quickly memorized the way. She folded the map. "Follow me," she told them quickly, and began running again.

"What the hell was that paper?" Tamara asked.

"Just follow me! I'll explain later!" Lily told them. Lily led them down two hallways, and then down a set of stairs. She slowed to a stop. There were no tapestries on the walls. How could there be a passageway?

"What the hell are we doing?" Tamara demanded.

"Just trust her!" Scorpius hissed.

Lily looked at the left wall, and just like before, she placed her hand on, and began to move swiftly along the hall. Once she'd gotten close to where the map had shown the passageway to be, her hand slipped through the wall. Lily looked at where her hand had disappeared. But she could still flex and feel her fingers. She looked at the others.

"Come on! This way."

Lily stepped through the wall to find a hidden hallway that was lined with candles. She walked this time, seeing no need to run any longer. She soon heard the others walking behind her.

"Dude, a hidden wall? That's genius!" Rex exclaimed.

"Now what was that map you had?" Tamara demanded again. The others all looked interested now.

Lily pulled out the map and sat on the floor where she unfolded it for all to see. "This is called the Marauders' Map. My grandfather made it with his three best friends while they were in school. It shows all of Hogwarts, with very few exceptions. Such as ways to Hogsmeade, and secret passageways like this," Lily explained. "My uncles nicked it from the caretaker in their time, and then gave it to my father. James stole it out of my dad's desk the summer before his second year."

"Are these dots people?" Scorpius asked.

"That's another brilliant thing about it. It shows you everyone in the castle, and where they are. It's not fooled by anything," Lily told them.

"That's genius!" Lars cheered.

Lily sighed. "Problem is, we can't keep it. James is going to notice that it's missing. He'll be ready to blame anyone for it."

"How are you going to get it back to him without knowing it was you though?" Lana asked.

"Simple. During Christmas break. I'll slip it into his room while he's at work. Then he'll simply believe that he left it," Lily replied.

"Or suspect you even more," Mitch warned.

But Lily just grinned smugly. "Of which he'll have no proof. I'll be fine."

"So, how are we getting back to the Shrieking Shack?" Rex asked.

Lily examined the map. "As odd as it sounds, we'll have to go out through the Whomping Willow. All the other exits lead to inside of the shops. It looks like the Whomping Willow will take us somewhere different than a shop."

"But how do we get by a tree that attacks people within its radius?" Justin asked.

Lily folded up the map. "The map usually tells you secrets once you're close enough. So let's go get Jace."

"I can't believe Jace passed out on the couch," Lar laughed as the group snuck out of the castle.

"I can't believe you guys didn't take him to his bed," Lana said with a shake of her head.

"Oh, he's a big boy," Scorpius said flippantly.

The group approached the Whomping Willow with caution, staying out of its reach. "What now, Lu?" Will asked.

Lily opened the map and looked at where the tree and their dots were. A little bubble appeared over their dots. "Hit the knot."

"Hit the knot on the tree," Lily said, repeated the map.

"What knot?" Justin asked.

"Actually, I think I see what she's talking about," Rex told them. He pulled out his wand and pointed it at a large branch that had fallen to the ground. "Windgardium Leviosa." He directed the branch closer to the tree, which didn't move an inch. Then he pushed it against a large knot on the tree. "Ok, someone test it."

"You're crazy," Tamara told him.

Lily rolled her eyes, and walked closer to the tree. Nothing happened. "I'm sure that it's safe," she told them. The rest of them approached, and Lily stood next to the roots of the tree. Near the bottom, she found a hold. "Found the entrance. Come on."

Lily found out that it was actually a tunnel. Lana lit a small branch on fire to light the way. She held it out to Lily. "Here, Lu. You take this."

Lily nodded and took the branch. After a few minutes, she came to stairs that led up. When Lily reached the top, she found a trap door. She pushed up, and the door opened easily. She kept climbing up, and delighted to see that it had led them directly into the Shrieking Shack. She stepped off of the stairs and looked around the room.

"Awesome!" Scorpius exclaimed. "It leads right to the shack."

"Perfect!" Mitch cheered from below.

"Here's a few candles," Scorpius said from the other side of the room. Lily came over, and lit them with their makeshift torch. Then as she put out the larger fire, Scorpius placed the candle around the room, giving the room a dim and even lighting.

"Where did you stash the stuff, Mitch?" Lars asked as he sat down on the couch.

Mitch began to dig around a pile of broken boards and planks. Then he came back with the bags. "Game on, guys!"

Later that night, Lily found herself standing by one of the windows, leaning against the windowsill. There was a half-moon out, and it was surrounded by stars. Behind her, the others were partying on. Will had brought along his portable music player, so music was blaring behind her. And the others had all thrown a bunch of wood into the middle of the floor, and lit it on fire with the help of the candles. Now they were all laughing or talking loudly, nursing a bottle of their own. Lily had a bottle of some kind of Muggle drink. It was a bit sour in taste, but it was easy to get used to.

"Thinking hard, Lily?"

Lily turned her head to see Scorpius walking toward her. The others were paying no attention to them, caught up in their drunken minds. Lily sighed. "Well, as long as I can still think, I thought I'd better think while I can."

Scorpius chuckled. "Understandable. Knut for your thoughts?"

Lily shook her head. "No, you can just have them. I was thinking about what would have happened if I'd become a Gryffindor at the sorting."

"Hmm. And how are those thoughts going?" he asked as he leaned against the wall next to the window.

"I'm just thinking of how different my life would be. I mean, I wouldn't have become a Seeker my first year. In fact, I probably wouldn't be a Seeker at all. James always wanted me to be a Chaser. And I'd probably end up like Albus and Hugo, little clones of James. So I'd

probably be an idiot, and I'd have no respect for a relationship," she listed.

"Not to mention you'd probably lose respect for yourself, eventually," Scorpius added.

"Exactly!" Lily exclaimed. "But, on the other hand . . . I'd still have my family. I'd like being at home, and . . ." Lily dropped her head against the window.

"So, do you regret being a Slytherin?" Scorpius asked.

Lily looked up at him. He didn't look angry, upset, or even sad. Just curious, and not at all judgmental. "No. I'm really glad that I'm a Slytherin."

Scorpius smiled. "We all are." The two laughed a little more, and then looked toward the moon again. Scorpius took a drink out of his bottle. "So, Lysander Scamander, huh?"

Lily blushed a little, but she smiled. "Yeah. Surprised?"

Scorpius gave a shrug. "A little. I guess I didn't expect you to go on a date with someone. At least not this young."

Lily rolled her eyes. "I'm thirteen, Scor. It's not overly young. Besides, it's just a date, not a honeymoon."

"He's older. My age. We don't have the purest thoughts," Scorpius warned.

"Yet I don't see you jumping every girl in sight because of your thoughts," Lily retorted.

"He's still fifteen. He might expect you to put out," Scorpius continued.

"And I promise you that I won't throw my panties at him," Lily said with a roll of her eyes. "Why are you so anti-date all of the sudden?"

Lily watched as Scorpius shifted uncomfortably where he stood. "I'm not anti-date," he muttered. He turned to look at her, his face

showing his defeat. "I'm just . . . I . . . I just don't want you to get hurt," he murmured.

Lily blushed even more, and felt her heart flutter at his words. But she rolled her eyes at him. "Thank you, Scorpius, but I can take care of myself."

Scorpius took another drink from his bottle. "I know you can, Lily. Just know that I'll always be there to kick some ass for ya."

Chapter Twenty-Three: Curiosity Never Killed The Snake

"Lily? Lily, wake up!"

Lily groaned as she was shaken roughly. She felt lightheaded, and very hungry. But she also felt as if she'd throw up if she ate. She opened her eyes and found Tamara shaking her. Lily blinked rapidly, trying to fully open her eyes. "What is it?" she muttered.

"We've all got to wake up and get back to the castle without anyone seeing us! Rex's watch says that it's a little past breakfast. That will make it seem as if we were all just taking a walk. Come on!" Tamara demanded.

Lily yawned as she sat up. Looking around, she could see the others all starting to awake as well. Bottles, each empty, were everywhere, and there was a bunch of ashes from where they had started a bonfire. The others all looked a bit tired and ragged, then again, they'd drunk more than she had.

"Merlin, it's too early for this!" Rex groaned loudly.

"Well get up anyway, before we get expelled," Lana said. Then she gave a loud yawn.

"Come on, guys. Let's get going," Scorpius muttered. He was up, and waiting by the tunnel.

Lily sighed and got up as well. She walked over and climbed into the tunnel. "Yeah, we should probably see how the other two are doing."

"I hope Lola's ok. She was a mess," Lana said.

"And she hadn't even had any of the hard stuff," Mitch laughed.

"Give her a break. After all, it was her first," Rex reminded them.

"True," Lars agreed as he entered the tunnel.

"So, what's the plan for today?" Justin asked.

"Quidditch practice after lunch," Scorpius replied.

"And detention for me before that," Lily said with a yawn.

"We've got band practice," Mitch reminded him.

"And us girls are smart enough to study for our O.W.L.S.," Lana added.

"So we've all got a full card," Will said with a laugh.

"I can't believe that you boys are actually starting a band," Tamara said with a sigh.

Mitch shrugged as the group came to the end of the tunnel. "I think it could turn out well."

"Who's playing what?" Lily asked. "I mean, Mitch is obviously playing the guitar, but the rest of you?"

"Rex is drumming, Justin's hitting base, and Will's taking up the vocals," Mitch told them.

"Pause in conversation," Scorpius told them. "What now?" He looked at Lily.

Lily just shrugged. "We climb out and run out of the tree's reach. I'll go first." Without hesitation, Lily climbed out and ran for it. She heard an almost silent 'whoosh' behind her, and with a quick look back, she could see a branch whipping past where she'd once been. It reared back, but froze. Lily stopped running, and the tree didn't move. She was out of reach. "Come on! Get out here!"

One by one, the others all came running out, panting once they'd finally gotten far enough away from the Whomping Willow.

Mitch held the stitch in his side. "Damn that's too much running for me! No way could I ever do sports."

"Yeah, maybe I'll shorten up practice today," Scorpius said after a short pant of his own.

After the Hogsmeade trip, September ended with nothing but drama. Word had quickly spread through all the Houses about the trashing of the Gryffindor dorm rooms, and teachers had been rough and

brutal about finding out the culprit, or culprits. Not all people knew about the notes left from SP, but those who did were very curious as to find out who it was. James had taken a big hit from the whole incident. Everyone had noticed that James Potter had been very aggravated lately, and Lily had heard that he'd been ranting about being robbed. Plus, after the incident, Elisa had begun to constantly follow James around the castle. And the one time she left his sight, she had later found him snogging another girl. Lily hadn't been surprised until she found out that he hadn't been found with Lyla, but with Susan Williams, a different girl in James's year. Elisa had an awful fit, but word had it that once she'd left, James and Susan began snogging again.

Professor Slughorn had come to the Slytherin common room to talk to all the Slytherins, and gave them a long lecture about how he was sure that it wasn't any of them, but how he'd better not hear of them doing anything like that. They'd all just nodded and said, "Yes, sir."

When the first day of October came, Lily woke up with a smile. It was her last day of detention, and she was extremely thankful. The detentions were getting in the way of everything else in her life.

Lily sat down at lunch with a huge smile that baffled the others.

"What's with that smile? History of Magic wasn't that fun," Hunter muttered as he pushed food around on his plate.

"My last day of detentions. I have full rights to be completely joyful at the moment," Lily retaliated.

"Miss Potter!"

Lily's shoulders tensed at the sound of Professor Longbottom's voice. Slowly, she looked to where the Professor was coming toward her. Everyone was looking, actually. "Yes, sir?" she asked. In her head, she was trying to think of what she'd have done. All that came to mind was the Gryffindor dorms, but he couldn't know about that . . . right?

Professor Longbottom stopped just beside Lily, and gave her a stern gaze. "Headmaster Brown would like to see you after dinner tonight. He wishes to discuss your detention for tonight."

Lily gave him a small nod. "Um, sir . . . what is my detention tonight?" Lily asked curiously.

Professor Longbottom gave her hair a small ruffle. "I've no idea," he told her before walking off toward the staff's table.

"What do you think the headmaster wants?" Lola asked quietly.

Lily shrugged. "No idea. I'm sure it's nothing serious," she assured.

But when Lily found herself making her way toward the headmaster's office after dinner that night, she was no longer sure of her earlier thoughts. Perhaps they had figured out that it was some Slytherins that had trashed the Gryffindors' dorm rooms. She never should have left the name SP on those walls! What would happen if Professor Brown did know it was her? Would she be expelled? Suspended? Her parents would kill her!

"Come in, Miss Potter!" Lily jumped in surprised. She hadn't even realized that she was now standing at the headmaster's door. She opened the door and stepped inside. Professor Brown was sitting behind his desk, his quill moving quickly as he wrote. He didn't at all look up. "Sit down, Lily."

Lily was comforted by his use of her name, but his tone of voice unsettled her. It wasn't at all warm or friendly like she was used to. It was a bit stale. The door slammed shut behind her, making Lily jump once more. She moved quickly to the seat in front of his desk, and sat down quietly. "What did you want to talk to me about, sir?"

Professor Brown didn't say anything, but kept on writing, his face pulled into something close to a scowl. Lily tried not to gulp at his look and silent tone. Instead she occupied herself by looking around the office. Gadgets were everywhere, lights and sounds buzzing through the room. The portraits in the room, portraying all the previous headmasters and headmistresses, were all either looking at them or sleeping. An owl was sitting on a perch next to the desk. It was a beautiful creature, black with silver markings decorating its feathers. It looked at Lily with large green eyes, its beak clicking twice. Lily felt an urge to reach out and stroke its feathers.

Professor Brown cleared his throat and began to mutter. "Problems, problems."

His words surprised Lily, making her relax back into her seat. "I'm sorry, sir, problems?"

Professor Brown set down his quill and folded up the paper he'd been writing on, and sealing it in an envelope. "Yes, problems, Lily. I've been swamped with them lately. More so than normal. I feel as if it'll be a long year this time around," he told her.

"As do I, sir," Lily muttered quietly. She glanced over at the magnificent bird once more.

Professor Brown noticed that her attention was adverted. "I see you've taken a liking to Hades." He did reach out to stroke the owl's feathers once. The owl's eyes closed momentarily, as if taking in the pleasure he felt from the touch.

"Yes," Lily replied. "He's very beautiful. What kind of owl is he?"

"He's a screech owl, actually. After seeing his color, I was surprised to learn that myself. I received him as a gift in my third year, and I've had him ever since. A bit old, but he's still a vital old creature," Professor Brown said with a small laugh.

Lily finally smiled as well. "Fond of him, are you?"

"One of my best friends," Professor Brown murmured.

Lily couldn't help it. She stood up, and moved to stroke the bird's great feathers. "I know the feeling. Even if they can't talk, they're bloody good listeners. You can tell them anything, have the worst day, but in the end they're still happy to see you," she said with a sigh.

"Sounds like you do know the feeling," he mused.

Lily nodded, and turned to look at him. "But I'm sure that you didn't ask for me so that we could talk about owls." She retook her seat.

Professor Brown sighed as he relaxed in his seat as well. "Yes, you're right. I asked you here to talk about your last detention. But I wonder if, as a friend, I could vent about something to you."

Lily's own brow furrowed this time. "About what, Jake?" she went casual with his name this time. After all, they were speaking as friends at the moment.

"As I've said, there have been loads of problems this year, and it's only the first day of October," he told her.

"What kind of problems are you talking about, Jacob?" she asked.

"There has been much more fighting this year. People sneaking out after curfew, not to mention the recent incident where the Gryffindor dorms were trashed. I'm sure you've heard," Professor Brown mentioned.

Lily released a very quiet sigh. "Yes, I've heard. How is that search going?" she asked with interest.

"Well, we've really no leads on who did it, and the Gryffindors are demanding that someone be found. James Potter has been very angry, claiming robbery of some personal possession. Sadly, with no evidence, I can give them no justice," Professor Brown replied. "Some are insisting that it is Miss Sammy Preece. The letters S and P were left on two walls, so people are assuming that they are meant as initials. Sammy Preece is the only one with those initials in school."

"What do you think, Jake?" Lily asked.

Lily watched as he sighed. "Personally, I think that Miss Preece had nothing at all to do with it. I also believe that it was a group of students, at least one of them a girl,"

"And if caught, what will happen to those students?" Lily questioned.

He sighed again. "That is question I've been wondering as well. Some of the staff has been stating suspension, some expulsion, and some a long period of detentions and loss of certain privileges." He scratched at his chin, which was starting to be consumed by black stubble. "I'm not exactly sure what I'll do, but it won't be pretty. It'll make your punishment for fighting look like a nice nap."

Lily's mind was racing, wondering if they'd ever be found out. She smoothly changed the subject. "On the note of my punishment, what is my detention for tonight?"

Professor Brown stretched out his fingers. "As you can see, my office is a bit of a mess, and I find myself very bad at organizing. So I thought that your detention tonight could be to organize my office," he told her.

Lily looked at him in surprise. "Really? But . . . how should I organize it?"

"However you want. Like I said, I'm terrible at it, so my advice wouldn't help at all. So, do as you see fit," Professor Brown replied. Without a word, he looked at the watch on his wrist. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to have a meeting with the staff. I will return in a bit. Until then, Lily." He gave a nod, and then stood from his desk. Lily stood as well, but he didn't say anything else as he left the room. He shut the door behind him, leaving Lily alone in the room.

Lily looked at his desk and the mess that was left on it. Unsure of what to do, she began to neatly stack the papers, put away his quills, and bottle up his ink. She picked up the letter, planning to set it on the middle of the desk, when she noticed the address of where it was going.

"Godric's Hollow

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Potter."

Lily stared at the letter, as if hoping she'd be able to see through the envelope. What was the headmaster writing to her parents for? Was it about her, or one of her brothers? She hadn't done anything to have him write to her parents, so it would have to be about one of her brothers . . . unless he suspected that she had something to do with the prank on the Gryffindors. Lily glanced up at the door, knowing in her head that Professor Brown would not be back so soon, then glanced at the portraits, who now all pretended to sleep.

"Bugger it," Lily muttered silently. She tore the seal, and pulled out the letter. She quickly unfolded it, and began to read.

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Potter,

It has come to my attention that there has been a bit of conflict among your children. I believe that this conflict is beginning to affect your daughter, Lily. In hopes of helping her, I would like your permission to take Lily on a daylong trip with me. I the day planned for the sixth of October, so please send me a reply before then. I know that she would have to have classes that day, but I have no doubts that she can easily be caught up, if she's not already years ahead of her year already.

Your's truly,

Headmaster of Hogwarts: Jacob M. Brown."

Lily scowled as she replaced the letter, fixing the seal. What the hell had he been talking about? Affecting her? She was fine! She no longer cared a bit about her brothers! But . . . then she began to wonder what this trip was about? Where did he want to take her?

"Don't the Muggles have a saying? Curiosity killed the cat, is it?"

Lily jumped. Her head shot up from her work, and her eyes locked with a man in a portrait. The eyes she was looking at were an odd blue, with a strange twinkle in them. Lily didn't have to think at all in order to recognize the man in the frame.

"Well, thankfully I'm a Slytherin and not a Gryffindor. You never hear about curiosity killing a snake," she retorted wittingly.

Albus Dumbledore smiled at her, and chuckled. "Quick-witted. Much like your mother. I assume that's where you get your looks. Yet every time I look at you, I can't help but think of your father. After all, you do have his eyes."

Lily did her best not to scowl, but her face did contort in confusion. "My father's eyes are green, sir. Mine aren't," she corrected.

"Not the color, Miss Potter." Lily's head snapped to another portrait. This one contained a man who had long, greasy black hair, and beetle black eyes. This man Lily didn't know, but the way he talked kind of irked her. It was slow, and a bit patronizing. "He's talking about the shape of your eyes. Almond-shaped. You got it from your

father, who in turn got them from his own mother, of who you were named after."

"Lily Evans," Lily murmured. She stepped around the desk, and approached the two portraits. "But, how do you know about my dead grandmother's eyes?"

"I fail to see how that is any of your business, Miss Potter," he retorted.

"Now, now, Severus, there's no need for hostility. After all, Miss Potter here is of your own House," Dumbledore murmured.

Lily's eyes widened, and she looked back to the greasy haired man instantly. "Severus? Severus Snape?"

Severus Snape raised an indifferent brow at her. "Yes?"

"You're the Half Blood Prince. I have your old potion book. Professor Slughorn gave it to me. He said you were excellent potion master. It's why he gave me the book," Lily explained.

"Really? Am I to assume that you are even exceptional at potions? If my memory is clear, which it is, your father was terrible at the subject, as was most of your family," Snape said with a small bit of a sneer.

"Slughorn mentions often that I'm the best student that he's ever had. I can make potions that no third year could ever dream of, let alone even attempt them. I work on the level of sixth year students without mistake," Lily said, her tone equally filled with a bit of contempt.

"Really? Such big talk for such a little girl," Snape sneered.

"You need big talk for an obvious truth," Lily said through gritted teeth. She turned away from the portraits, and began to clean around the office.

"You know, I too think of your father when I look at you. Like you, he had a severe disregard for the rules. Constantly looking for trouble and strutting around the castle, gathering all the attention you can get," Snape said condescendingly.

Lily turned her head and glared at him. "I think you've mistaken me for one of my brothers. They're the Golden Potters, the ones everyone loves. Just because my last name is Potter that doesn't mean that I enjoy the name. In fact, I find that it rather disappears among these walls. I'm happy to be known by nothing more than Lily. It's a bit refreshing, really." She returned to cleaning around the room.

"Miss Potter," she heard Dumbledore speak, "I must ask, how do you like being in Slytherin?"

Lily shrugged as she worked. "I love it, really. No one looks at me because I'm a Potter. People look at me because of my talents, my skills. They look at me for me," she explained.

"That's an excellent reason to love something. I trust you've made friends in a House that most would think to be your enemy," Dumbledore commented.

"Many. I've become quite popular in Slytherin House," she told him.

"Slytherin's princess, are you?" Dumbledore asked with a chuckle.

But Lily stopped, her blood running cold. Did Dumbledore know? Would he say anything to Professor Brown?

"I guess so," Lily muttered after a moment. She began to clean again.

Lily didn't say anything to her friends about her talk with the portraits or the letter she'd read. She only told them about her talk with Professor Brown, and even those details had been small and brief. But as the days continued, her mind often wandered to thoughts about this so called 'trip'. As the sixth came closer, Lily began to think that her parents had refused the idea of a trip. But then the fifth came, and Lily found herself being pulled out of Care of Magical Creatures by Professor Brown.

The two trekked out of ear shot of the rest of the class, who were surrounding Hagrid as he talked about hippogriffs. He would be showing the class a few next week, apparently.

"What is it, Professor?" Lily asked. She knew that they were out of hearing distance, but she kept up the formalities.

"I want to take you a trip tomorrow," he stated quickly. "Someplace that I feel may lift your spirits."

"Lift my spirits?" Lily said with a scoff. "I didn't know that I needed lifting."

He stuck his hands into the pockets of his robes. "It's not that. I've noticed a change in your behavior. You seem a bit more moody, more prone to anger and violence. Part of this, I believe to have to do with growing up. But I also feel that there's more to it."

"I read the letter on your desk," Lily admitted. "You think this all has to do with my fighting with my brothers and cousins," she accused.

Professor Brown didn't at all seem angry at her admitting to opening the letter. "I do, although I don't think it's purely because of the fighting. I think it also has to do with the changes you and your family are going through. So, to get you away from these changes, I'd like to take you somewhere to get your mind off of it."

Lily didn't get it. She was confused on the whole idea. There was nothing wrong with her, and she was not prone to violence . . . well, that was a little true. But even if he was right about how she'd changed, where could he take her that would help? A mental ward?

So she sighed. "Ok, Professor. I can't wait," she muttered.

"Wait for me in front of the castle doors after breakfast. And since you'll be missing your lessons, have a friend take notes for you. I'd advise you ask Miss Pritchard instead of Mr. Pucey," he told her. Then he began to walk away with nothing but a simple wave. Lily turned around, and made her way back to the class, who were all still listening to Hagrid.

"Now, who can tell me what you do before approaching a hippogriff?" Hagrid asked them. Lily raised her hand as she moved to stand by her friends. "Yes, Lily?"

"You bow to it, as a sign of respect. If it bows back, then you can approach. If it doesn't then you'll want to slowly back away from it," Lily answered.

Hagrid smiled and chuckled. "Correct. Ten points to Slytherin. Not surprised that you know about that."

Lily rolled her eyes. Was any teacher ever surprised that Harry Potter's daughter knew something?

"Now, if it bows, and you want to touch it, how do you approach it?" Hagrid asked.

Lily watched as Hugo raised his hand. Hagrid pointed at him. "You walked closer to it slowly, and then wait for it to come to you?"

"Excellent! Ten points to Gryffindor. You're absolutely right. You don't want to come at them too quick and frighten or offend them. You need steady steps, and slow movements," Hagrid told them.

"Better not get too close to them then, Hugo Boy. Your lanky body and big feet are anything but steady. Knowing you, you'd trip right in front of it, and offend it," Christian mocked, making all the Slytherins in the class snicker. Hugo's ears turned bright red.

Hagrid, hearing only the snickering, spoke a little louder. "Alright, calm down now, let's be quiet. Now, since class is up, I'll leave you with this note. I want an essay on the proper etiquette you show around a hippogriff for our next class. Now, off you go," he dismissed.

They all began to close and lock their rambunctious books, and began to put their things into their bags. Lily stuffed her robe inside her bag as well, finding it too hot to keep wearing it. Jace did the same, and loosened his tie.

"So, what did Brown want?" Jace asked.

"He's taking me on a trip tomorrow," Lily muttered. "Some crap about how I'm becoming more angry and violent. I think it's his form of punishment."

"How could it be a punishment if he's taking you from classes?" Hunter asked with a laugh.

Lily laughed too, and they all began to walk to the castle, wanting to spend their break in the cool air of the castle. "I guess so. That reminds me, Jace, can you take notes for Divination for me?"

Jace groaned. "Man, you're ditching me in that class? Who's going to keep me awake?"

Lily rolled her eyes again. "I'm sure you'll make it through."

Jace sighed. "Alright. I'll do my best on taking note for you. Just remember that I've never done it before."

"He really said that to you?" Scorpius asked. They were all at dinner, and Lily had just told them all about what Professor Brown had said to her about the trip.

Lily nodded. "Yeah. It still confuses me," she muttered.

"I wonder where he's going to take you," Lana said.

"As do I, but if it'll make me forget about the idiot Potters, then I'll be glad to go," Lily joked.

"How are you going to catch up on your work though?" Scorpius asked curiously.

"I'm taking notes for her tomorrow," Lola answered.

"I didn't trust Jace to do all of them," Lily muttered to Scorpius.

"Hey, princess," Mitch said in a hushed voice, "you've got some admirers at the Gryffindor table."

The others all looked toward the Gryffindor table, and Lily easily saw who Mitch was talking about. Hugo was staring intently at her, along with two other Gryffindors. One of them was Paige Wilde. Lily glared at her, and gave her a sneer. Wilde stood from her seat, and began to walk toward the door. All the while, she kept glancing at Lily. Once she was out, Lily didn't stop staring at the open doors of the Great Hall.

Lily stood up. "I'll see you guys in the common room."

Lola grabbed Lily's wrist. "Do you want me to come with you?"

Lily shook her head, and gently pulled her wrist free. "No. I'll be fine by myself," she told them. She pulled her wand out, but held it loosely. She didn't want to seem 'violent'. She walked away from the table, and made her way toward the doors. When she stepped out into the Entrance Hall, she noticed that it was practically empty. Only one person stood by the stairs. Wilde.

"What's got your wand in a knot, Wilde?" Lily sneered as she approached her.

Wilde glared at her as well. "I've got a problem with you, snake!"

"Get in line," Lily muttered. "You're not the first idiot to tell me that."

"An idiot? That's rich coming from you," she said snidely.

Lily scoffed. "I'm the top of our class, moron. Surely, only an idiot would mistake that." Lily gripped her wand tighter, waiting for a reason.

"You sound confident about that," Paige said through gritted teeth. "How about we prove who's the better witch?"

Lily narrowed her eyes. "What are you suggesting, Wilde?"

"A duel. In the trophy room at midnight," she suggested.

"You're on," Lily growled. "You and me, no seconds. But bring whoever you want. They can see me beat you." Lily turned her back and walked toward the dungeons.

"You're really going to go through with her challenge?" Shannon asked as the girls all sat in their dorm room. It would be midnight soon, but Lily was tending to her Felix Felicis first. "I mean, what if it's come kind of trap to get you into trouble."

"You don't have to come if you don't want to," Lily told her dryly. "But I know that I am. I'm not afraid of anything little Miss Wilde has to throw at me."

"Plus, Lily's got that map. She can check to see if it's a trap or not," Lola reminded them.

"I know I'm going," Megan told them. "I can't wait to see you wipe that idiotic look off of her face."

"I've still got to do that Defense Against the Dark Arts paper for tomorrow," Izzy stated as she flipped through her text book.

"Your fault for putting it off until now," Lola teased.

"True, but I don't really care," Izzy said with a smile.

"I'm exhausted, so I'm staying behind," Shannon told them.

"Your loss," Megan replied.

"Are the boys going?" Izzy asked.

"Jace and Christian are, but the other boys still have homework to do as well," Lily answered as she carefully stirred the liquid in her cauldron. As days went, it was slowly turning a pale yellow, meaning that she was doing good. The closer it got to that golden color, the better.

"Are we leaving soon?" Megan asked eagerly.

"What time is it?" Lily asked.

"You've got a little more than ten minutes before midnight," Shannon told her as she dressed for bed.

Lily sighed as she slowly stopped stirring. "Yeah. We'd better get going. Lola, check the map and see where Wilde is."

Lily could hear Lola fumbling with the map as she began to put all of her potion equipment away. "She's on her way to the trophy room, it seems. Julie McLaggen, Stacy Finnigan, and Hugo Boy are with her."

"Perfect," Lily muttered. She grabbed her wand and put it in her front pocket. "Lola, you hold onto the map, but make sure that Hugo never sees it. He'll recognize it immediately."

"Mischief managed," Lola replied. Then she folded up the map and stuck it into her pocket.

"Let's go," Lily told them. She looked at Shannon and Izzy. "We'll see you two in the morning."

"Good luck," Izzy told her.

"Have fun," Shannon called from her bed.

The three girls left the room, and found Jace and Christian waiting for them at the bottom of the stairs.

"You ready, Lil?" Jace asked.

"Of course," Lily replied. "Ready to watch?"

"More like excited," Christian said with a grin. The group of five left the common room, and began their journey to the trophy room. They were silent, except for Lola who would quietly check the map every so often before clearing the parchment again.

Once they stood outside the trophy room, Lily looked back at Lola. "Is it safe to go in?"

Lola nodded. "I just check. Go on in. They're waiting."

Lily opened the door, and walked inside. As the others trailed in, she kept her eye on Paige Wilde, who glared at her in return. Lily walked to stand right in front of her in the middle of the room. "Are you ready, Wilde?"

"Of course," Paige said confidently. "Stacy silenced the room, so don't worry about whispering."

"Then let's begin," Lily told her. She raised her wand in front of her face, and Paige did the same. Then they both bowed, and took a few steps back. They held their wands at each other, ready to strike.

"Begin!" Jace announced.

"Expelli-

"Impedimenta!" Lily casted. Paige flew off of her feet, flying back toward the wall.

Paige scrambled to get up. "Furnunculus!"

"Protego!" Lily kept her wand up as her shield kept her from Paige's spell. "Langlock!" Paige's eyes went wide, and when she opened her mouth, Lily could see that her tongue was sticking to the top of her mouth. Lily had never been happier to have Snape's book. Then she began to remember a story she'd heard from her uncle Ron. "Slugulus Eructo!"

Paige's mouth closed as she placed a hand on her stomach. She began to lurch forward a bit, like she was ready to fall.

"She looks like she's going to puke!" Christian said with a laugh.

Julie McLaggen held up her wand in defense as she moved over to Paige. But Lily didn't do a thing. "Paige?" Julie said quietly.

In response, Paige's mouth opened, and a slug slipped around her tongue and splattered onto the floor. There was a collective gasp of disgust, but Lily only grinned. "I wouldn't bother taking her to the Hospital Wing. From what I hear, you have to wait for it to stop on its own. Hugo should know about that. It was his father that told us the story," she mocked. Slowly, she walked back toward her friends. "I told you Paige, I'm the top of our class, and you're no more than an idiot. But after this . . . you're not just an idiot. You're a disgrace." Lily looked at the other Slytherins, and motioned for them to follow her out.

"That was bloody brilliant, Lil!" Christian cheered quietly.

"That was quick too!" Jace laughed. "What a wimp!"

"But I don't think we've heard the last of her," Lola warned.

Lily shrugged. "I'd be even more disappointed in her if this was all she had."

Chapter Twenty-Four: How Unfair Life Can Be

Lily paced in front of the doors in the Entrance Hall, waiting impatiently for Professor Brown to get there. She'd had a small breakfast, not really feeling up to eating. Her mind kept moving back to the fight last night. Every time she'd looked toward the Gryffindor table, she couldn't help but notice that Paige Wilde was missing from the table. She was waiting for one of the Professors to swoop down on her and hand her a thousand more detentions.

"Miss Potter!"

Lily jumped. She turned around to see Professor Brown was finally coming toward her. "Professor," she sighed.

"Are you ready? Someone to take notes? Homework taken care of?" Professor Brown asked.

Lily thought of everything. Lola was taking notes, she had taken care of her potion before breakfast, her homework was done the night before, and she'd shut Paige Wilde's mouth. That was all that came to her mind. "Yes. I'm ready."

Professor Brown opened the doors. "Then let's go." Lily followed him out of the castle and across the grounds. "My office looks very nice, by the way. Thank you."

Lily shrugged. "No problem at all, sir."

"And I hear that you had an interesting talk with Professors Dumbledore and Snape?" he inquired.

Lily tensed slightly behind him. What had they said? "Yes," she said carefully. "You could say that. It was more like witty banter though."

The headmaster laughed as he opened the gate, waving Lily through. "I'm not surprised. Albus Dumbledore has become famous for that while a portrait."

Once the gate had closed, Professor Brown led her a bit more up the trail toward Hogsmeade. But they didn't go the entire way. Halfway there, he held out his arm. Wordlessly, Lily took his arm. Quickly, she felt the twisted and sickening feeling of being sucked

through a tight tube. When her feet touched back on the ground, Lily sucked in a deep and needed breath. "Bloody hell," she muttered.

"I quite agree. But I'm not a fan of Flooing," Professor Brown told her. "Wait here a moment."

As he walked away from her, Lily looked around. The room they were in was white, floors and walls both. There were seats everywhere, most of them filled with people, some normal, but some with obvious problems, such as distorted skin, strange appendages, and problems talking. But Lily recognized the place where she stood. She'd come here three times that she could remember. Once to visit Victoire once she'd begun working, once to visit George after a work accident, and once when she was little, and had accidentally turned Albus purple, and no one could fix him at home.

"St. Mungo's," Lily murmured to herself. She looked around at all the people. She knew nobody here. She looked over to where Professor Brown had gone, and he was standing over by the reception desk. When he caught her eye, he waved her over. Lily approached him, and had to ask, "Why are we here?"

"You'll see," he told me. "Now come along. We're going to the second floor."

Lily scowled as she tried to think of what was on the second floor, but she couldn't remember what Victoire had told her. She didn't ask, somehow knowing he wouldn't tell her. They were silent as they walked, and Lily felt a bit squeamish as they went. She was never really comfortable in St. Mungo's. In her mind, if you had to go to the hospital, something was wrong. St. Mungo's was never accompanied with a good thing. When Victoire had begun work as a Healer on the third floor, which was Potions and Plant Poisoning, Lily hadn't even wanted to visit her at work. It made her a bit sick.

"You know, Professor, I've never mentioned it, but I sort of hate this hospital," Lily told him.

Professor Brown stopped in the middle of the hallway and looked at her in interest. "Really? Why?"

Lily gulped as she squinted a bit against the bright white walls. She hated how sterile everything seemed. "Because if you have to go to

the hospital, something is wrong with you. People are sick here. People die here. I don't see how bringing me around a place that includes death can lift my spirits," she muttered.

Professor Brown smiled. "But that's only one part of the hospital. Along with sickness, people leave here after being healed, and they feel as if they can dance. And with death, the most healthy babies leave this hospital with mothers that can't stop smiling. You yourself left that same way," he told her.

Lily pulled in a breath through her nose, taking in the information. It was true. Babies were born here, such as herself. And this place had healed her uncle George. And Victoire was always talking about the people she helped here. "So, what are we doing here?" she asked quietly.

Professor Brown motioned her toward a door on the left. "On the second floor, we have magical bugs and diseases. These illnesses don't just infect adults, but also children. We have children here that will never go to Hogwarts. Not because they aren't magical, but because they are not well. Yet, these kids have some of the highest spirits, and the biggest smiles," he told her. "So, I've brought you here so that you can meet someone who rests inside this room as we speak. And I think that he'd like to meet you as well. So, go on in."

Lily looked at the door he brought her to. 234. Lily brought in a deep breath again, and glanced at Professor Brown. But he only motioned for her to go in, and said nothing. So Lily sucked up her courage, and opened the door. She stepped in quietly, and closed the door behind her. The room was just as white and sterile looking as the rest of the hospital, but in this room there was a bed, and in this bed was a kid.

It was a boy. He looked to be younger than her, but surely not by much. His hair was cropped a bit short, but it was still thick. It was black, but it looked like silk. His eyes were a light blue color, and they didn't at all look sad or subdued. He was pale, but his skin looked unmarred. But then I saw his left arm. The arm was a sickly, grey color, like it was decaying. Lily felt her insides shake as she looked at it.

The boy then noticed that someone had joined him. He didn't smile big, but he gave a small one. His eyes lighted up a bit even. It all confused Lily. "Hi," he greeted. His voice was kind of high for a boy, but Lily found that it sounded angelic.

Lily cleared her throat, feeling that it was thick. "Hi," she mumbled.

The boy didn't at all seem upset by her awkward tone. "What's your name?" he asked.

Lily tried not to shake as she spoke. "My name's Lily. What's yours?" Hesitantly, she took a few steps closer to the boy's bed.

"I'm Duncan. Duncan Chapman," he said with a smile.

Lily let out a breath. "Well I'm Lily Potter," she told him.

Duncan smiled even more at her. "It's nice to meet you, Lily."

Lily gave him a small smile in return. "It's nice to meet you too, Duncan." She sat down in the chair next to his bed. "So, . . ." Lily wasn't sure what to say to him.

Duncan gave a small giggle. "You can ask, Lily. I don't mind."

Lily assumed that he meant his illness. "Why are you here, Duncan?"

"I have Vanishing Sickness. That's where the infected part of the body disappears. See?" He pulled back the blanket, which Lily noticed had been covering below his waist. Then she saw that there was no below the waist. His legs were gone, yet she had seen the shape of them while under the blanket. He recovered them. "My left leg disappeared two years ago. At first my mum and dad thought that it was just a bit of accidental magic. But then it never came back, so they brought me here. My right leg disappeared eight months ago," he explained.

Lily felt a little sick at the thought. How had his parents reacted to seeing their child walking around with seemingly only one leg? "What about your arm?" she asked.

Duncan looked at the grey arm as well. "Oh, it's been like that for about four months now. The Healers aren't sure if this means that it will disappear, or if it's something else," he told her. He looked at Lily, and despite the fact that he had just gotten done telling her something a bit horrific, he looked excited. "So, how old are you?"

Lily was a bit surprised at his question. "Um . . . I'm thirteen," she answered.

"So are you at Hogwarts then?" he asked eagerly.

She nodded. "Yeah, I'm in my third year now."

Duncan gave a happy sigh. "I wish I could go sometimes. I think it would be a lot of fun. Do you get to go to Hogsmeade?"

Lily felt a pang of sympathy for the poor boy. "Yeah, third years get to go. How old are you, Duncan?"

He beamed brightly. "I'm eleven. My birthday was last June."

Lily did her best to smile. "Did you have a fun birthday?" she asked.

"Oh yeah! My mum and dad came, and they brought my grandma and grandpa with them! My grandma even made me a little birthday cake! And my mum bought me a new drawing book, and my grandparents got me a new chess set, and my dad played five games with me!" he recounted.

Lily couldn't help but to actually smile at his story. "That sounds like a lot of fun. Did you get everything you wished for?"

"Almost. I really wanted to go to Hogwarts, but my Healer said that I was too sick," he replied.

Lily felt her chest tighten. Not allowed to go to Hogwarts the year you're eligible to go. Lily knew that she would have been crushed. "I'm sorry to hear that."

But Duncan shrugged and smiled. "It's ok. Do you like it there? Is it fun? I bet you have a lot friends there."

"It is fun. Classes are really fun," she told him.

And that's how Lily spent her day. She and Duncan talked, and she even ate lunch with him. Mostly, Lily told him all about Hogwarts, about the secret passageways, the moving staircases, the kitchens, the Quidditch pitch. Then she told him about her House, her friends, the Quidditch team, and about all of her classes. In return, Lily learned that Duncan was an only child, and had two cousins he'd never met before, because they lived all the way in America. He loved Chocolate Frogs, and loved to draw and play chess. He loved to play chess with his dad, but because his dad worked a lot, he never really came to visit Duncan. His mum came three times a week, every day she had off of work herself. He had made a lot of friends with the Healers that worked on him, and he was loved by a lot of them. She liked talking to Duncan. He was so happy and so upbeat that you'd have never thought that he was sick, or that you couldn't see his legs. You'd have never thought this kid was in a hospital, with an illness that could possibly kill him. He was so full of life.

"Do you have any brothers or sisters?" Duncan asked.

Lily bit her lip, hoping that he wouldn't delve too much into this topic. "I have two big brothers. My oldest brother is a sixth year, and my other brother is a fifth year," she told him.

"What are their names?" he asked

"The biggest one is James, and the other one is Albus," Lily replied.

"Are they in Slytherin too?" Duncan asked innocently.

"No, they're Gryffindors. Most of my family is," she retorted. "They all wanted to be Gryffindors."

"I'd want to be a Slytherin," he told her, honesty showing in his eyes and voice.

Lily looked at him with a bit of surprise. "Really? Why?" Lily couldn't see Duncan, happy go-lucky, giggly boy, ever being a Slytherin. Not that she'd made it sound dreary to him, but she hadn't made it sound like a festival.

"Well, you're in Slytherin, and you're really nice. And you said you're friends with a lot of other Slytherins. So that means that they're all nice too," Duncan said with a smile.

Lily couldn't think of anything to say, but she was as the Muggles say "saved by the bell" when the door to the room opened and a Healer stepped inside. "Visiting hours are up, you two," he warned.

Duncan smiled at the sight of the Healer. "Hi, Gordon! This is my new friend, Lily! She came to visit me today!"

The Healer, Gordon, smiled as well. "Really? Well I'm glad to see that you've been having fun. But it's time for Lily to go back to school."

Duncan gave a nod. "Ok. Will you come visit me again, Lily?"

Lily looked at the little boy, not much younger than her, but so much smaller. This kind and sweet boy who had nothing, yet felt as if he had everything he could ever want. And Lily smiled. "Of course I'll come and see you again. As soon as I can."

"Promise?" Duncan asked quietly.

Gently, Lily took his hand. "I promise. Bye, Duncan."

"Bye, Lily! I'll see you soon then!" he said goodbye with a bright smile.

Lily smiled back to him as she left the room. The Healer left behind her. So Lily looked back at him. "Um, do you know where my headmaster is?" Lily asked him.

"He's up on the fifth floor having tea. He's waiting for you," he told her.

"Thank you," Lily said quickly, before turning and running toward the stairs. She went up three floors until she reached the fifth floor, which was just a large open area, with tables and chairs for people to sit and relax. A little gift shop was to the right. Professor Brown was sitting at one of these tables, alone, drinking something from a tiny mug.

"Professor?" Lily called out as she made her way to his table. She sat down across from him. "Have you been here the whole time?"

Professor Brown smiled at her from his mug. He swallowed the drink, which looked like tea, then spoke. "Yes, I was chatting with various Healers that were previous students of mine," he told her. "Don't worry, I was not alone until about five minutes before you walked in. So, how was your visit with Duncan?"

Lily gave a small smile. "It was nice. I like talking with him." Lily paused, hesitating on what she wanted to ask. She was afraid of the answer she'd get. "Sir, he'll get better, right?"

Professor Brown drained the rest of his mug. Then coughed a bit before he responded. "Well, people have known to get better after having Vanishing Sickness. But two years is an awful long time to have it, and the usual methods aren't working. Even though they are working and trying new things every day, the Healers are fearing the worst."

Lily gulped before asking her next question. "What's the longest time that someone's had Vanishing Sickness?"

Professor Brown's eyes were downcast when he answered. "Usually, a patient has four years to recover before they die."

Lily felt a rush of emotion at his answer, and she could only think of one thing to do. "Sir, when we get back to school, may I speak with Professor Dumbledore and Snape alone?"

Lily felt a little odd, being allowed to be alone in the headmaster's office alone. It was different not coming up here because she was punished, but because she requested it. When the stairs stopped moving, Lily quickly charged into the room, shutting the doors behind her. She whirled toward the two portraits, her eyes intense.

"People say that you two men are some of the bravest and smartest the wizarding world has seen," Lily stated. "So I want to ask you something, and I want an answer!"

Dumbledore didn't look angry at her demanding tone. Instead he looked merely curious. "And what is the question, Miss Potter?"

Lily brought in a shaky breath. "How can fate choose to give such a kind and sweet little boy such a dangerous illness? How can life just pick some innocent kid and give him a sickness that could kill him? How can it deny him from being like everyone else? How can it keep him from going to Hogwarts, the one place he's dreamed of going? How can fate and life do that to him?" she demanded angrily. She could feel her eyes burning with unshed tears, and she could feel her muscles shaking. She wouldn't cry. Lily Luna did not cry!

Professor Dumbledore looked at her soberly, as if he saw the way the world worked in his eyes. "Because life and fate are two very cruel forces. They don't necessarily care about who is sweet and kind, and who is angry and violent. A person is a person, there is no discrimination between fate and life's work," he said with sorrow.

"In other words, Miss Potter," Snape said in the cold and calculating tone, "life is not fair."

Lily glared at the portraits, not happy with either of their answers. She turned away from them and ran from the office. She didn't wait for the stairs to move, but descended them herself. She didn't run through the halls, not wanting to hear some teacher or prefect complain, but she did move quickly through the halls, taking the shortcuts she'd remembered from the map. When she reached the empty wall in the dungeons, she gave the password, and then entered the empty common room. Lily looked at the clock. It was probably midway or so through dinner. She didn't want to see the others. Not in her state. But luck wasn't on her side, as someone began to come down from the dormitories.

"Lil?" Scorpius said in surprise. "When did you get back? The others have all been waiting to hear about your day." But then he looked at Lily fully, and he stopped. "What's wrong?"

Lily froze, then averted her eyes. It was then that she noticed the three small tears trailing down her cheeks. She flushed, embarrassed by her emotions, and quickly wiped away the tears. "Nothing's wrong," she muttered angrily.

Scorpius came closer and grabbed at her wrist, stopping her from wiping at her eyes. "I'm not dumb, Lily. I know something wrong. What is it?"

But Lily didn't answer. Instead she just focused on calming herself. Taking a deep breath in, and letting out a deep breath. Scorpius must have sensed that she wasn't going to answer. So he pulled her wrist a little. "Come with me," he whispered.

A little confused, Lily let him pull her toward the stairs. But instead of the girls' direction, he pulled her to the boys' rooms. He opened the door to his dormitory, and led her inside. He closed the door behind him, and then pulled her to one of the beds. "Get up here," he whispered. Lily obeyed, and got up on the bed. Scorpius pulled the curtains closed, and then pulled out his wand and whispered some spell that Lily couldn't make out. Lily looked around them, although it was pointless. It looked just like it did when she pulled her curtains closed. Dark, with a green tint to the darkness. But this time she wasn't alone, and she wasn't in her bed. She was with Scorpius, in his bed.

"Scorpius, I don't want to talk about it," she mumbled, her lips barely moving. She hated it, but she could feel more tears falling.

"That's fine," he said gently. "I understand. But even when I don't want to talk, I also hate to be alone at those times."

Lily reflected on that a little. It was nice to not be alone, to have someone nearby. "Thank you," she whispered in the middle of a sort of sob.

Scorpius reached out and wiped away a few of her tears. "It's ok, Lily. And if you want to talk, I'll listen," he assured.

Lily pulled in a few breaths as she tried to stop the tear flow. But she just couldn't stop. "Professor Brown took me to St. Mungo's to meet a little boy with Vanishing Sickness. He's eleven, yet he might never get to go to Hogwarts. And they can't fix him, and he might die! Why would that happen to such a nice boy? He didn't deserve it!" she cried. Lily buried her face into her arms, doing her best to hide the rest of her tears.

She felt Scorpius run a comforting hand through her hair. "Not everyone deserves the bad things that happen to them. I know. It sucks."

"He's just a little boy," she whispered.

Scorpius pulled her close so that he was hugging her. It was comforting and warm. "It'll be ok, Lily. Whatever happens, it'll all be ok. I promise," he assured.

Lily's eyelids flickered rapidly in the darkness. What had happened? She felt a warmth coming from her right. Lily turned her body to see somebody laying next to her, but she couldn't see their face. But Lily could see the blonde hair that she connected with Scorpius. Had she really cried herself to sleep? She felt her cheek flush in embarrassment. She can't believe that she did that in front of him. She never cried in front of anyone! At least he was nice about it though.

Lily's first instinct was to leave, but she didn't want to risk waking anyone up, especially Scorpius. But then again, did she really want to risk having to hear the boys' comments if they found that she'd slept in Scorpius's bed? Deciding to not want to put up with the boys, Lily pulled back the curtains and looked out. It was completely dark, so dark that she could barely see her hand in front of her. Quietly, Lily slipped out of the bed, and let the curtains fall back into place. She tiptoed her way to the door, and did her best to silently open the door. She stepped out and slowly closed their door. Then she moved quickly from the boys' stairs, and ascended the girls'. She was quiet again as she moved to step into her dorm, not wanting to wake any of the girls. She moved toward her bed, and pulled the curtains around her. She heard a crinkle, and lit up her wand. There was paper on her pillow. Lily looked at them to see extensive notes from all her classes. There was a tiny piece of paper on the top of them all.

"Here are those notes. Jace said he did his best on taking notes in Divination, but admitted to sleeping through half of the class. - Lola"

Lily giggled softly, and moved the papers to her bedside table. Then she put her wand away, and laid down on her bed, not bothering to dress for bed. Lily didn't really sleep, but just kind of laid there with her eyes closed. She felt like an idiot after last night. She knew life was unfair . . . but did it have to be like that to such a young and sweet boy? Lily felt her eyes burn a little again, so she quickly sat up and moved to the bathroom. She took a quick shower, hoping that it would calm her down. Thankfully, going through her morning routine

seemed to help her forget about the injustice that had been thrust upon such a little boy.

She was just beginning to brush through her hair when the other girls began to wake up. They were all surprised, but Lola was the first one to ask. "Have you even been to sleep?" she demanded.

Lily smiled and raised a brow at her friend. "What do you mean?" She grabbed a green ribbon from her dresser.

"Well you never came in last night. When did you get back to school?" Shannon asked.

"I call bathroom first!" Megan announced, making her way to the bathroom.

"It was pretty late. You guys were already asleep," Lily lied. "But I slept a little."

"How long have you been up?" Lola asked as she brushed through her own hair.

Lily sighed as she tied her hair up with the ribbon, and swept her bangs behind her ear. "Maybe an hour or so, I guess. Not long really," she assured.

Lola looked at her with narrowed eyes. "If you're sure."

Lily nodded, and then moved to check on her potion, waiting for Lola to be ready. "Thanks for the notes, by the way. I'll finish up any homework at break," Lily told her.

"No problem. So, where did Professor Brown take you?" Lola questioned, gaining the attention of the other two girls in the room.

Lily grinned. "Let's wait until we're at breakfast. I'm sure the others will want to know, and this way I'll only have give the story once."

"Did it lift your spirits, though?" Izzy joked.

Lily laughed with the other girls. "It did, actually. It was a good day, yesterday."

When the other girls were all finally ready, they left the dorm room together. The other girls told Lily all about what she'd missed the day before, and they were laughing when Jace and Christian caught up with them.

"Lil!" Jace exclaimed. He hugged her tightly from behind, scaring the girls.

"Merlin, Jace!" Lily laughed. He let her go, and they all began to walk again.

"So what did you do yesterday?" Jace asked immediately.

Lily rolled her eyes. "Wait until we're with the others. I'll explain it then. But, more importantly, I heard that you fell asleep when you were supposed to be taking notes for me." She gave him an expectant look.

It didn't faze Jace. "Oh, please! Like you care!"

Lily laughed. "True. That is the dumbest, yet easy, class ever."

"Tell me about it," Jace said with a laugh.

The group sat down at the Slytherin table and immediately began to fill their plates. They were joined soon after.

"Hey, kiddies," Mitch greeted.

"Hey," Lana said with a smile.

"Hey, Lily Lu's back," Lars said cheerfully as he and Scorpius sat down as well.

"And she must have had either a good time or a good morning, because she is glowing," Scorpius commented.

Lily looked at him, hoping that she wasn't blushing. But he just looked at her curiously. "Both actually," she told them.

"So what did you do yesterday?" Lars asked.

So Lily told them about her day at St. Mungo's, excluding how she had come back earlier than they thought, and about how Duncan might not make it.

"That poor boy," Shannon said sympathetically.

"At least he had a visitor," Megan replied.

"He sounds cute," Lana assured.

"So, you said you were going to go see him again. When are you going to have time to go?" Scorpius asked.

Lily sighed. "Well, probably not until Christmas break," she answered.

"Mail's here," Lars announced. They all looked up as owls began to flood the room, dropping off letters and packages to kids.

Lily noticed her parents' owl, Fawkes, flying high. She was beginning to wonder who she was here for when he began to dive toward her table. He stopped short, landing neatly on her shoulder, two letters in his beak. Lily held out her hand, and he dropped the letters. He didn't stick around for a treat, but instead took off, disappearing among the other owls. Since her friends were distracted by their own letters or the paper, Lily looked at her two letters. One from her mum and one from her dad. Lily opened the one from her mum first.

"Dear Lily,

I hope you're having fun, and I hope that you enjoyed your first Hogsmeade trip. Professor Brown wrote us, asking if it was ok for him to take you a trip. We said yes, so since it's the seventh, I'm guessing that you went. You'll have to tell me about it, such as where you went. Professor Brown wouldn't tell us. I swear, sometimes he's just as secretive as Dumbledore was. Haha. I got a letter from Hagrid the other day, telling how he loved having you as a student. I hope you enjoy having him as a teacher, I know I did.

Well, I figured that I should be the one to tell you that your grandfather is planning on retiring this time next year. Apparently he's been thinking about this for a while now, and he sort of sprung

it on us kids at a dinner last week. I know you and your grandfather are close, so this is just so you're not too shocked when he tells all you kids.

Anyways, I'll be expecting a letter back soon. Otherwise, I'll just come to Hogwarts. You can choose to call me out or not, haha. I hope you're having fun, sweetheart.

Love,

Mum

P.S. Don't think that I've forgotten about that fight you got into last month. Expect a talk when you come home."

Lily sighed as she read the letter. She'd never expected her mum to forget the fight. And she laughed at the news about her grandfather. She'd already known that. He'd told her personally. She put the letter in her bag, deciding to write her back later. Then she pulled out her dad's letter.

"Dear Princess,

I'm sure your mother's covered the subject of how we hope you're having fun, so I'll move on. Arthur talked to me about how you two have been fixing the bike, and he hinted about how there was a girl in the family who would really appreciate having it. My first thought was to discard the idea, but then I thought about it a bit more. I know that I won't have time to ride it, so I'll have no use for it. So, I've relented to let you have it. But! Know that there will be major rules, which we will talk about over break. So don't get too excited. Besides, you and your grandfather still have to fix it.

Love,

Dad"

Lily lit up in excitement. She was going to have the bike! It took all her efforts not to cheer in excitement. She didn't think her dad would give in so easily.

"Damn. The Falcons won their last game. That's going to put a dent in the Appleby Arrows chances of taking the lead in points for the World Cup," Lars grumbled as he read the Daily Prophet.

"Good. The Falcons are going to win this year," Lily said with a grin.

Lars scoffed, but still smirked. "You wish."

"I know they'll win," Lily told him. "I wish that an owl would knock off James's head."

"Too big. The owl would be so hurt it would never fly again," Scorpius replied.

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